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MERIT FEASTING AMONG THE KALASH KAFIRS OF NORTH WESTERN PAKISTAN

by

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B.A., The University of British Columbia, 1975

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY & SOCIOLOGY

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores merit feasting among the Kalash Kafirs of Chitral District, north western Pakistan. Feasting is a multifunctional exchange phenomenon found universally in societies having primitive (pre-market) economies. The Kalash example will illustrate that this institution links economic, social, political, and religious dimensions in such non-monetary cultures.

I argue that while habitat may have the potential of supporting such an exchange system, individual industry in agriculture and animal husbandry is the critical economic factor. Accumulated wealth is then transformed into social and religious power and prestige through its redistribution at feasts. The Kalash have an informal political hierarchy where men achieve high positions by exhibiting the same qualities which make feast-givers successful aspirants for rank. Kalash social organization, particularly their bilateral kinship structure, is also reflected in the institution of merit feasting.

Feasting is more than a secular event for the Kalash, and sections of this thesis illustrate their assertion that wealth is god-given and must be redistributed at feasts if the gods are to continue to bestow their blessings. Moreover, feasts are both cultural performances (where the artistic forms of a culture are expressed), as well as public forums at which information and ideas may be widely shared and re-inforced.

Presently among a portion of the Kalash population, a cultural renaissance is occurring which permitted the opportunity to document the following materials and hopefully, future possibilities of recording the customs and beliefs of an archaic culture that otherwise is fast slipping into obscurity.

Michael McCann

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PROLOGUE

The information in this thesis is a portion of the ethnographic data gathered over a total of fifteen months during three separate visits to the Kalash Kafirs of north western Pakistan. The Kalash (pop. 2,500 - January, 1974) are the last practitioners of an ancient Vedic culture which has persisted for more than a millenium in the isolation of the remote and rugged Hindu Kush Mountains. Who these people are and how they came to be found there is the subject of Chapter One and Appendix 2: History and Language. I am concerned here only with establishing the why, when and how I became involved in the area.

Since its violent conversion to Islam in 1895-6, the area west of and immediately adjacent to the region occupied by the Kalash has been re-named Nuristan, 'The Land of (Allah's) Light'. (Nuristan comprises the easternmost district of Kunar Province, north eastern Afghanistan.) Prior to the conversion the area was called Kafiristan, 'The Land of the Infidels', an appellation which now applies only to the Kalash valleys. The region has always been famous for its sophisticated wood architecture and buildings whose facades and interiors are covered in elaborate wood carving designs. In pre-conversion times, these carvings symbolized the formal ranks of the house owners, who achieved the right to display these symbols through merit feasting. It was these elaborate carved symbols which came to my attention in 1971-2 during a primitive art course given by Audrey Hawthorn at the University of British Columbia.

In the fall of 1972 while travelling in north-eastern Afghanistan in Badakhshan Province,(an area north of Nuristan,) I was introduced to Peter Snoy, a German anthropologist, who was working in that area on behalf of the South Asian Institute of Heidelberg University. Through him I learned more about life in Kafiristan (Nuristan), and particularly the existence of

the Kalaṣh, with whom Snoy had done field work in 1955-6. These people, living under the rule of the British in India, had escaped the 1895-6 conversion to Islam. They are still 'practicing pagans' in the third quarter of the 20th century.

I first visited the Kalaṣh for three months in the summer of 1973. A subsequent visit the following year for two weeks did little more than maintain my contacts there. During the late fall of 1976 I was able to return there and spend enough time to learn the language and to begin to study the culture.

I remained until the following December (1977), living principally in Kalaṣh valleys but also travelling for three weeks (July 1977) in the Bashgal Valley, one of the three of four major river systems in Nuristan. (In some places, the Bashgal is only about thirty miles distant across the mountains from the Kalaṣh areas of habitation.) Since I had by that time spent slightly less than a year with the Kalaṣh, the Bashgal trip proved to be a valuable comparison. As the thesis will make clear, the Kalaṣh share many traditions with the Bashgalis. Being a woman studying alone in Kafiristan presented rewarding challenges as well as some insurmountable difficulties. To begin with, Pakistan throughout has been in political turmoil. The third elections since the country gained its independence in 1947 were held in March, 1977. They were followed by civil disturbances which resulted in the overthrow of the government three months later, and the eventual imposition of martial law. The status of foreign visitors became very unclear and no one from the local to the state level felt sufficiently confident of his or her own authority to grant extended research visas. There were numerous suggestions as to how such permission could be obtained and the individual who eventually did sign my research visa (ten months later) was a woman who had been hired as an aide to a minister in Islamabad only a day or two before it was issued.

As for life in the isolated tribal valleys, the Kalaṣh divide their world into two domains, "on•jeṣh•ṭa" (pure/sacred) and "prā•ga•ta" (impure), each of which is relative to, and

defines the other. The sacred realm is associated with the gods (their altars and mountain habitats), men (and their ritual activities) and goats (including their corrals and sheds). Of potential danger and potentially polluting to these sacred places, objects, and persons are the major events in the human life cycle: birth, menstruation, sexual intercourse (if not followed by a ritual bath) and death. Since these rites of passage are intimately associated with women either biologically or culturally, for example, women are the principle mourners at funerals, they themselves are considered as agents of pollution, particularly their mouths, hair, genitals and undergarments. In order not to offend the Kalaṣh, a woman anthropologist must observe outwardly at least, these rules of purity and pollution.

While among the Kalaṣh there are some events that are entirely inaccessible to all anthropologists, and others accessible only to male anthropologists. There are many more situations in which the presence of women is either discouraged or strictly prohibited. Where women's presence is only discouraged it is possible for a female anthropologist to attend; but being the only woman present inevitably leads to endless teasing and ribaldry. At many vital ritual sequences, critical to a fuller understanding of Kalaṣh religious practices, the presence of women is generally forbidden. Those must be documented by male informants who were willing to report on them. Or sometimes for religious reasons often no coverage is possible.

This frustration is at times encountered by both male and female anthropologists. Peter Snoy's doctoral advisor Adolf Friedrich died in the field in 1955 while observing the Kalaṣh winter solstice festival (rather, three or four days later in Rawalpindi where he had gone for medical help). The Kalaṣh of Bomboret Valley, where he had been doing his work, insist that his death occurred because Friedrich had taped some of the most sacred of the winter solstice hymns. These songs are given only on one night at the Indrain god-site and only in the presence of those

members of the sacred Kalash male community who have been baptised in the sacrificial blood of a sacred male goat specifically for the purpose of attending this ritual. (This requirement also excludes Kalash men from other valleys (and nowadays, anthropologists) who have not performed the purifications.) In 1977, some Bomboret men described to me the incident which they claimed had occurred "about five years ago". By the time they had noticed Friedrich "over there standing behind a tree with his tape-recorder on, it was too late to 'save' him. He had already recorded the hymns." No woman anthropologist is permitted to attend this god-site at any time, although considering the Kalash version of Friedrich's experience, one wonders why would anyone wish to!

I spent the first winter in Bomboret Valley, living with a Kalash extended family that I had chosen because it was a branch of one of the wealthiest and highest ranking clans in the valley who had given the most lavish merit feasts possible in their culture. I hoped to learn about the traditional Kalash ways of achieving power by living with this family. As I was soon to find out, however, this family was in serious economic, social and moral difficulties. Within a few weeks, due to internal disputes which had occurred prior to my arrival, the joint family broke up. Illness, loss of their land to the Muslims, infidelity of their daughters, and total lack of co-operation by their sons were the sources of continuing tensions even after the split.

The winter brought more than a metre of snow, the heaviest fall in more than sixty years. When not cleared off immediately the roofs would leak, turning the earth floors to mud. Firewood, becoming more difficult to obtain in Kalash valleys as the forests are depleted, was frequently green and unseasoned. Much time that winter was spent with the remaining members of the family, usually gathered about a single, open fire in the center of the room. The wet wood being burnt gave off a thick acrid smoke, providing a painful kind of comfort. During the coldest two to three week period, people coughed incessantly, not from having colds, but from

being cold to the bone. Two members of the family had active tuberculosis that winter which further diminished the group's morale.

I learned to cook some Kalaṣh dishes, such as boiled kidney beans mixed with walnuts and onions crushed by a mortar and pestle, with rock salt to taste. Being the only mature woman in the household when the mother went to the menstrual hut each month, it fell to me to cook for the family. Making pancake-type breads on an open fire burning with wet wood, I soon found out why most Kalaṣh women over the age of fifty-five or sixty are blind.

Smoke was not the only thing that could bring tears to one's eyes. There were some poignant moments, for example, at festivals or rituals in which a few simple elements combined to produce sheer visual poetry. One night, flaming eight foot long torches were brandished by hundreds of men dancing wildly to hymns sung by several scores of women. Their haunting voices warmed the cold midnight air and rose amid the dark bare branches of ancient mulberry and walnut trees into a clear, endless sky, punctuated with stars and a full winter moon. These intense moments make all the efforts that one expends in field work suddenly worthwhile.

In April (1977), I moved from Bomboret to Rombour Valley in order to do translations and further documentation with the help of a Kalaṣh man who speaks English. Most of the material on the merit feast, which is the main subject of this thesis, was gathered during this period. I remained in Rombour working with Saifullah Jan, and living in the house of his father, Qasim Khan, until I returned to Canada in December, 1977. I would like to emphasize here that without the generous help of Saifullah Jan and his father, my understanding of Kalaṣh culture could have never taken shape.

There are many other people who have assisted me in my work since I became involved the the Kalaṣh people in 1973. In Vancouver, Professor Audrey Hawthorn, Dr. K.O.L. Burridge, and

Dr. Kathleen Gough gave continued academic and moral support over the years. In Afghanistan, Deborah Salter and her husband Max von Klimburg frequently provided hospitality and much more. In Pakistan, Shaikh Habib Ullah, and his brother Aziz Ullah, Wazir Ali Shah, Haider Ali Shah, and of course, Saifullah Jan, Qasim Khan and 'working associate' Kush Nawaz, have all been helpful in ways too numerous to list. Also I would like to extend my appreciation to Walter Huber and to thank Peter Snoy for his initial inspiration and continuing correspondence. They deserve credit for much of what appears herein, and any inadequacies are due strictly to my own shortcomings. For the past two summers, the Graduate Studies Department at the University of British Columbia has provided funds, enabling me to arrange my fieldwork data and to prepare my thesis.

CHAPTER 1 - Introduction:

i) The Theme:

The principal focus of this thesis is on merit feasting among the Kalash Kafirs of Chitral District, Northern Pakistan. Feasting is a type of economic and social exchange found in non-monetary (pre-market) economies in many parts of the world. Many of these 'primitive' societies, including the Kafirs, have developed this form to a high degree. My purpose for choosing the merit feast is twofold - there is a dearth in the available literature (published and unpublished) on all aspects of Kalash culture but particularly on this subject. In his dissertation on Kafir Status and Hierarchy, (1977) Palwal devotes a page or two plus some other passing references to the Kalash feast but, unfortunately, the material is largely incorrect and hopelessly inadequate. In the past, fieldworkers did not take the time to learn Kalash language and as a result they achieved little depth in their reports.

The second reason for choosing the feast is that, as a multi-functional institution which has political, religious, economic, and social ramifications, it is a convenient topic around which to organize substantial ethnographic information on the Kalash. Feasting can only be understood in the context of the physical environment of a society and its capacity for producing large amounts of foodstuffs, which is in turn dependent upon the socio-economic factors involved in organizing people and their labor.

Because their way of life will not last much longer, there is some urgency to record the practices and beliefs of the Kalash. However, before I expand on this point, which will take up the remainder of Chapter One, I will first include a brief summary of the literature which is available on Kafiristan generally and for the Kalash specifically.

ii) Sources:

a) Greater Kafiristan:

The classic reference for the area is The Kafirs of the

Hindu-Kush.(1896), by a British Medical Officer, Sir Ge Scott Robertson. It is the only extensive book-length f work documentation done before the 1895-6 conversion to I of the Kafirs at the hands of the Amir of Kabul, Abdur Rah. There are five or six linguistically distinct Kafir (now Mu tribes in the western watershed areas of the Hindu Kush. Du 1891-2, Robertson lived primarily with the Kom and Kati Kafir two Bashgal Valley 'sub-groups' who speak mutually intelligibl dialects.

Robertson went there to write ethnography but in one year was not able to become fluent in Kativiri or Komviri language. This, plus the fact that he was not a trained ethnologist, resulte in an account, which, by the standards of modern day ethnography, suffers from many gaps and inadequacies. It is, of course, unfair to be overly critical of the book. There has always been a lifetime's work for a dozen anthropologists in Kafiristan, and Robertson did an admirable job despite the obstacles he encountered.

To supplement this work there are a few early histories such as Mountstuart Elphinstone's Account of the Kingdom of Cabaul (1815), which provides information from interviews with some Kafirs travelling in Kabul. An older account of this type is John Biddulph's Tribes of the Hindoo Koosh (1880), plus some early autobiographies written by a number of early Kafir converts to Islam who learned Persian or Urdu script and wrote about their own tribal customs. One example is the work of a Bashgali, Kata Muhammad Adullah Elias Azar (Palwal, 1977).

Those with first-hand recollections of the pre-Islamic period in Nuristan are dead now. In 1949, the Norwegian linguist Georg Morgenstierne had the opportunity to work with the last Bashgali Kafir priest who, to save his life, had fled over the mountains to the Kalash valley of Bomboret where he lived out the rest of his days with several hundred other refugees. In 1964 Morgenstierne, with his Afghan 'counterpart' (as they are so

termed) Raziq Palwal, worked in the Bashgal Valley with one of the last survivors of that era named "Badur" (Palwal, 1977:17). The material from those interviews was published in Afghanistan Journal from 1969 to 1971. Palwal himself wrote both his M.A. thesis (The Mother Goddess in Kafiristan, 1972) and his PhD. thesis (The Kafir Status and Hierarchy..., 1977)on aspects of Kafir culture. However, his fieldwork was brief, he was not fluent in any Kafiri language, and his work does not distinguish clearly between past and present practices.

An Englishman, Schoyler Jones, re-worked some aspects of Robertson's account and published Men of Influence in Nuristan (1974), plus numerous other articles specifically on the Waigal Valley in Nuristan. Since Jones did his work in that area several other people have conducted in-depth field work there and as a result, have criticized his material. Most of their reports from the field have not appeared (Palwal, 1977:16; Von Klimburg p.c., David Katz, Doctoral Candidate, University of California, p.c.).

Some information can still be gathered from living Nuristanis whose relatives told stories about Kafir times before they died (Strand, 1974; Jones, 1974, a & b). As well, there are some practices which are remnants from earlier times, for example, merit feasting which still continues in Nuristan, although to a much lesser degree. There is at present, however, a major civil war going on in Nuristan between the locals and the Russian-backed national ruling Communists, The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). All the inhabitants from the largest Bashgali village (Kamdesh) fled to Pakistan as refugees in November, 1978, and much of the old wood architecture has been burned to the ground this year as a result of mortar fire (Strand, p.c.). (Since May, 1979, Nuristani guerilla fighters have entirely liberated Kunar Province of all Communist forces.) It is too soon to say what the outcome will be in terms of radical social and political changes in the area although one can safely assume that the possibilities of further research is far from the

Nuristanis' minds at this time.

ii) Sources:

b) The Kalash:

The radical changes in former Kafiristan (Nuristan) since the conversion place an increased emphasis upon the Kalaṣh as the only remaining non-Islamicized people of the entire region. Being the only Kafir group located in the eastern watershed of the Hindu Kush, they were protected by the British from conversion at the hands of the Afghans. There is, however, a certain irony to this situation because in the past, according to Sir George Scott Robertson, the Kalaṣh were:

> a most servile and degraded race and...not the true independent Kafirs of the Hindu Kush but an idolatrous tribe of slaves, subject to the Mehtar (King) of Chitral, and living within his borders...(1896:4)

Robertson's nineteenth century ethnocentrisms aside, the Kalaṣh have returned to prominence largely because their traditional culture has survived. Since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they had gradually been rendered less and less powerful by the Chitralis. In the twentieth century, through a turn of fate, they have far exceeded their earlier insignificance compared to the other more sophisticated Kafir tribes in pre-conversion times. It can be shown "that their religious systems (and other social customs) bear similarities to, but (are) not identical with those of former Kafiristan." (Jettmar, 1974:x), and for these reasons the Kalaṣh are ethnographically important. Despite this distinction, the literature on the Kalaṣh is still very sparse to date. The most extensive work is a linguistic analysis by Georg Morgenstierne: "Notes on Kalaṣha" (1973). There are some short articles on particular deities: Graziosi's "The Wooden Statue of Dezalik, A Kalash Divinity" (1961), or, on festivals, Morgenstierne's "The Spring Festival of the Kalaṣh" (1947) and Siiger's article on the same festival, "The Joshi of the Kalaṣh" (1974), plus Snoy's short note on one aspect of the winter solstice festival, "DIZILA WAT" (1974).

Apart from myself, there is only one fieldworker who has learned Kalaṣh language, Peter Parkes. This individual completed an M.A. thesis The Kalaṣh Kafirs (1972) but his Ph.D. dissertation, researched in the field between Fall, 1975 and Spring, 1977, is still in process.

iii) Continuity and Change - The Kalaṣh Situation in the 1970's:

While it is still possible to do fieldwork on aspects of Kafir culture and religion among the Kalaṣh, they, like so many of the world's small and archaic societies today, face a precarious and uncertain future. There are three main valleys of Kalaṣh settlement - Birir, Bomboret and Rombour - each exhibiting different social changes. For the rest of this chapter, I will discuss these various changes which, unless some unforeseen events occur in the near future, are all likely to lead toward an eventual end of traditional Kafir culture.

Since the advent of Pakistan (1947) and the total amalgamation of the independent Kingdom of Chitral with the state in July, 1969 (Wazir Ali Shah, p.c.), there appears to be a slight rise in the standard of living for some Kalaṣh. Since the complete merger with Pakistan the Kafir 'head tax', "jizya" (locally also called "ush•ūr" or "za•kat" - see Appendix 2: Language and History) which the Kalaṣh paid to the Mehtar (which was 1/10th of the total annual produce equalling about 4,100 kilos of foodgrains yearly) plus "be•gār", two years of forced labor to the Mehtar by all land-owning Kalaṣh males, have both ended. Moreover, the availability of AID wheat and powdered milk since the 1970's has lessened the plight of some Kalaṣh. The rapid decimation of the Kalaṣh population, a phenomenon of the first half of this century, appears to have halted. There are other influences, however, which have begun rapidly to erode Kalaṣh culture.

Since the late 1960's, the Pakistan government has been promoting the Kalaṣh as a tourist item. Japanese, European, and North American 'adventure travel' companies increasingly

feature the picturesque Kalash Kafir valley, 'The Land of the (Last) Pagan Infidels', as a must on an Asian excursion itinerary. The Pakistan Tourist Bureau has in mind a short day or two visit to see this exotic, blue-eyed fair-haired tribe, descendents of the deserters from Alexander the Great's army, who are still living in pastoral simplicity a millenium and a half later. (It is surprising how many 'scholars' also show up in the valleys hoping to document this allegation by postulating, for example, the capitals in the Household/Clan Goddess Temple to be tribal versions of Greek Corinthian capitals. (See Sketch #1) For the relatively small sum of approximately $10.00, the Kalash women, with names like "Lon•don Bi•bi" (London Baby) and "La•hor Fi•lim" (Lahore Film), will perform an authentic tribal dance against the dramatic backdrop of the snow-covered Hindu Kush mountains. The eye is captured by the glitter of the women's colourful costumes that have a 'film star' extravagance and Super 8's and 35 mm's whirl and click (Illustration #3). This scene is a far cry from Sir George Scott Robertson's description (1896:51) of a Kalash dance in 1891, when:

> the appearance of the witch-like old women dancing heavily their peculiar polka dance-step, singly or in pairs, was strange almost weird.

As bondsmen of the Chitrali Mehtar, the Kalash had been supplying the royal harem for centuries. Somehow, one suspects that the Kalash, understandably cautious about Robertson's presence (Chitral was not made a part of the British Empire in India until 1895 and Englishmen were still a rarity at that time), had purposefully selected the least desirable of their womenfolk to perform for him. Death has kindly spared Robertson from the experience of the ultimate taming of the 'wild Kafirs of the Hindu Kush'!

It is not until one has stayed a number of weeks in Kalash valleys that one begins to wonder where people who have a simple agricultural/herding economy get money to buy such elaborate costumes. One medium-length string of red trade beads from

Italy or Czechoslovakia cost in 1977 twelve rupees or about one and a half dollars and some Kalaṣh women wear hundreds of strands (Illustration #3). Moreover, one marvels that Kalaṣh women, who have been the mainstay agriculturalists on their small, terraced plots for at least the last one thousand years, can do a single day's work in the fields attired in such elaborate costumes. The fact is that many of these young Kalaṣh 'dancing girls' do not receive their sustenance from agriculture and much of their costumes come by way of gifts from Muslim suitors. Prostitution, not unexpectedly, has been accompanied by severe psychological effects upon young Kalaṣh men. The rough, goat-hair clothes worn by the latter while herding the goats have become symbols of their comparative lack of sophistication and lack of attractiveness to their women, who prefer Muslim tourists scented and dressed in crisp clean cottons and bearing gifts of beads, tea, and fancy biscuits. Kalaṣh men sometimes sing mocking songs to these 'dancing girls', asking them "Mai ghũ•ri ja•gãĩy, ko pa•laiy parra?" ("Why do you flee from me when you see me wearing my goat-hair coat?"). (See glossary at the end of the thesis for definitions and guide to orthography.) If young men increasingly refuse to take up their traditional herding occupations (many now dream of going into the hotel business), and if the young women's growing disinterest in farming persists, the traditional economy of the Kalaṣh and the degree of tribal independence of self-sufficiency which it brings will be threatened, as it already is, in some villages.

iv) Social Change:

a) Birir:

When I first visited the Kalaṣh in 1973, only Birir, one of the three 'secluded' valleys which they inhabit, was accessible by road (See Map). Although that year I spent most of a three-month stay in another valley, Bomboret (which did not have road access until 1976), I formed an impression of Birir as the most strongly affected by incursions from the outside, particularly

from tourists and Chitrali merchants. The latter have moved into the area and set up shops which carry candy, soap, sugar, tea, kerosene, flashlights, batteries, beads, rice, and cotton cloth, which many Kalash men now use for clothing. The money to buy these items is not generated by traditional economic activities but by outside wage labor for the Muslims, by tourism, and by prostitution. (See Chapter Two, section ix.)

My views with regard to the degree of cultural change in Birir compared with the other two valleys was to alter in the course of subsequent visits due to my deepening knowledge of the area. Also, Bomboret is now undergoing even more rapid changes than Birir, a situation which I will discuss later.

My description so far might suggest that change is not desirable. This is not the impression which I wish to create. It is not possible to "stem the tide of change in these areas". (Wazir Ali Shah, 1974:118) The Kalash have as much right as any other people to decide whether there are any benefits for them in the range of available modern technologies. But exploitation inevitably appears when the entrepreneurial elements of a more sophisticated, dominant group make available modern consumer goods to a traditionally inward-looking society. As the reference to tourism illustrates, the acquisition of these objects occurs at the cost of their economic self-sufficiency and often their traditional social values and moral integrity.

The high conversion rate to Islam is an example of the critical changes occurring in Birir. By the 1970's, the majority of Kafir villages and households in this valley were composed of a mixture of Kalash and Shaikh, the name given to Kalash converts to Islam. Despite being within a twenty mile radius of the other two tribal valleys, Birir still has different gods and rituals and its own distinct dialect. Nevertheless, because there are so many Muslims,(both Chitralis and Shaikh converts) living in the valley, the speech of the Birir Kalash is laced throughout with Khowar words, the language of the

neighbouring Chitrali people. (See Appendix 2: Language and History.) Conversations between the Birir locals switch rapidly back and forth between Khowar and Kalaṣh and the process has become so unconscious that they seem not to notice which language they are using. It is quite conceivable that in the future, the Kalaṣh language will eventually fall into disuse in Birir as it has done in the other Kalaṣh Shaikh areas of Jinjoret, Shishi Kui and Urtsun in the Southern Chitral District.

Another effect of outside influences, as I perceived the situation in 1973, was the decay and apparent discontinuation of some of their annual festivals. The most famous yearly ritual of the Birir Kalash, which happened during the autumn festival of the "Pũr̃", was called "Bu•dā•lɛ̣k". In this rite, the most virile shepherd, having just spend a rigorous summer in the high pastures, distinguishes himself in sports competitions played against the other young men. He is rewarded by being permitted to choose as his lover any Kalaṣh girl or woman that he fancies. The hoped-for result of this match is the woman's impregnation, and the Kalaṣh believe that the offspring will carry on the strongest of their seeds. In Kalaṣh language, an individual will be referred to as "zõr be•a•nè", "from a strong/forceful seed", or "di•tai be•aiy moch, shɛ̣•tā•si mu•ža•rõ o", "the man born from among those energetic seeds". (See glossary at back for definitions and guide to orthology.)

Outsiders familiar with the Kalaṣh wistfully report that since the early 1960's, this festival has not been celebrated. One can assume that this is a result of over-exposure by Muslim/Pakistani voyeurism. However, as a result of a subsequently longer year-long visit to the Kalaṣh, I came to realize that the "Bu•dā•lɛ̣k" festival is still being performed, although in circumspect fashion. For the Birir Kalaṣh appear to have been able to make a critical separation in their lives between what the numerous government officials and tourists expect, want, or are in fact, permitted to see, and their own private rituals, some

of which are now shrouded in secrecy and skillful deception.

The Kalaṣh generally are very aware of the need for techniques specifically intended to beguile outsiders and they are experienced in their use. Robertson dismissed them rather hastily as "servile and degraded", but there is an explanation in their history of about five hundred years of subjugation by the Muslim Kho peoples of the surrounding Chitral District. (See Appendix 2: Language and History). Kalaṣh language is particularly rich in idiomatic expressions of the type which describe these subterfuges. An example is the perjorative word "ha•li•vai" which means a person who outwardly is as sweet as candy (made from sugar and flour), and inwardly is manipulative and acquisitive in intent. In this same vein is the expression "trush•nə̃ř•una uk kadda", meaning a person who, being unnoticeable as "water flowing between the roots of wheat plants", works his or her way into another's good graces. Similarly, someone making "chā•kur•una uk kadda" is a Kalaṣh who cleverly works him or herself into favour with an unsuspecting person like "water being blown through the coiled intestines of a slaughtered animal" (Illustration #1). A final example, most often used to describe the artful co-option of the Chitrali Mehtar or other outside person of authority is "ba•zu•rē rouw a•ti, gə̃a•aiy dra•nē", "to slip in (unnoticed) through the sleeve of someone's shirt and come out at his neck", that is, the Mehtar in unsuspecting and full co-operation with the Kalaṣh person who is manipulating him. (See Orthography and Glossary at the end of thesis for pronunciations and definitions.)

An example: outsiders attending the "Pə̃ř" autumn fesitval in Birir are likely to be suddenly and unsuspectingly secreted away from the festivities at an opportune moment. This gesture is unobtrusively couched as a generous offer, made by an all too hospitable Kalaṣh host perhaps to enjoy a meal of hot-cooked bread and fresh goat's cheese with him at his house. This "ha•li•vai" (candy) host is of course making "chā•kur•una uk".

Later, when the guest leaves the Kalash valley to return to his home, he will also confirm the general Muslim consensus that "alas! the 'Bu•dā•lɛk' is no more!"

The Birir people are so conscious of the need to be secretive about the persistence of practices such as the "Bu•dā•lɛk" that they will often even exclude Kalash guests from the other valleys who have come for "Pũr". It is impossible to tell at this point how long this built-in cultural protective mechanism will be able to perserve traditional Kalash culture in Birir. The language deterioration already referred to shows no signs of reversing and the valley economy has been significantly affected by Chitrali and Pathan outsiders who own substantial amounts of land, grape vines, fruit and walnut trees and control the logging rights to the surrounding forests. It seems unlikely that "chā•kur•una uk" will persist for long against the steady impact of Chitrali and Pakistani infrastructure and control.

These developments deserve close and immediate attention. Unfortunately, I have no extended fieldwork experience in the Birir Valley and therefore cannot provide further details on the present situation. The Kalash inhabitants of Birir themselves presently align their sympathies with the Rombour Kalash in taking a critical stand against the Bomboret Kalash, whose actions they perceive as having a desultory effect upon both the Bomboret community and the whole Kalash tribe. This position is made clearer in the following section. Having lived in Bomboret Valley for a total of seven months over a five year period, I was able to observe first-hand many of the changes which are occurring there.

iv) Social Change: Bomboret

When I first visited the area in 1973, the road to Bomboret was still under construction and the first four-wheel drive vehicles did not begin to arrive there until the summer of 1976. The opening of this road has had major effects on the lives of many valley residents. As just one example, the joint family with which I lived for the first winter split up as a result of the household head giving permission to his second eldest son

to build a tourist hotel in partnership with a Muslim entrepreneur.

This hotel was built next to the field already given to the eldest son as his part of his inheritance. The location was desirable because it was beside the road and jeeps carrying tourists would have direct access. The eldest son anticipated great inconveniences to him and his wife, who must grow their grain subsistence on this plot, and moved his family in protest. His fears were realized the following summer when his crops were being trampled down as the field was turned into an open latrine for hotel guests. Moreover, the Muslim announced, after the hotel was completed, that he had no intention of sharing any of the profits with the Kalaṣh family until his construction expenses had been recovered. This amount became more inflated each time it was discussed.

By 1977, there were three new Muslim tourist hotels in the valley and two more under construction. One was in fact being built directly across the road from the Kalaṣh women's menstrual hut. Despite the fact that since the 1950's the Pakistani government has made Kalaṣh lands and walnut trees legally inalienable, there are loopholes in the regulations. In this instance, some local Muslim person must have come up with his own version of "trush·nǯ̌r·una uk" and like "water flowing un-noticed between the roots in a wheat field", persuaded the original Kalaṣh owner to part with this strategic piece of land.

At any one time there are from two to a dozen women staying in this menstrual hut. Because the building is located at some distance from the three or four villages that use it, its occupants are quite vulnerable, particularly at night, to unexpected callers. Hotel guests, typically half a dozen young men on holiday from Karachi or Lahore, are not obligated by the same strict laws of purity and pollution which force the Kalaṣh men to keep their distance.

Valley residents perceived dangers in this situation but

but were very slow to react. This seemed to be a common reaction by the Bomboret people toward these major changes in their lives. Perhaps it is that they have long suffered a sense of helplessness against the Mehtar's rule. Perhaps being a non-literate people whose whole frame of reference is the present, they are unable to grasp the full implications of these changes for their future collective lives.

In October, 1977, four months later, the Deputy Commissioner of Chitral was petitioned at a Minorities Meeting by some of the Bomboret 'elders' to put a stop to further construction of the hotel. This was done until the D.C. could personally review the situation. However, the government does not seem to have a full grasp of the problems either because the following month the same D.C. issued a directive to the Central Authorities in Islamabad to hasten the construction of the road into Rombour Valley. He said that the continued remoteness of that valley was becoming a serious drawback to its future development!

The Kalaṣh menstrual hut is one of the most fundamental Kalaṣh institutions. Its discontinuation would spell the end of Kalaṣh religion, which is based on the strict separation or 'controlled contact' between the pure and the impure realms. The institution faces threats not only from outside forces such as in the hotels, but from attitudes of the Kalaṣh themselves. To illustrate this point: all babies are born in a special corner of the menstrual hut that houses the parturition goddess, "De·zā·lik", thus initiating the child as a Kafir from its very entry into the world. More recently a few women have been choosing instead to stay in the more comfortable houses of neighbouring Muslims for their delivery and confinement. The birth prayers in a Muslim ambience cannot, of course, be offered to the Goddess and the question is now being asked whether or not the children born in these circumstances are true Kafirs. Another endangered heritage is their rich oral tradiation and the skills of their impromptu orators. (Illustration #'s 2 & 12) These oral

forms, the dominant idiom of expression and the focal point of all Kalaṣh festivities, are constantly brought to the observer's attention. However, the longer one spends with the Kalaṣh, the more one becomes aware of the fragility of this cultural wealth. The loss of the Kalaṣh oral traditions is as close as the death of any one of the very few local singers who have steeped themselves in the details of their own Kafir culture. The loss has been more pronounced in Bomboret than in Birir. Many people - particularly the younger generation - have stopped singing these songs. This declining interest is one manifestation of a crisis being experienced by the youth as a result of tourism and other aspects of Muslim penetration. Having lost pride in their own culture, fewer and fewer young people are bothering to learn the geneologies or personal anecdotes about the deceased that accompany stories dating back more than five hundred years.

At the 1977 spring festival "ǯōē•shi", in Bomboret Valley, the predominant theme of many songs presented by the older men was the rapid decay of their Kafir traditions. These songs lamented that the gay festivities of the past cannot presently be seen or heard because they are "shā•ra ṣhiŋg•una", "sealed up inside the long (silent) horn of a wild mountain goat". They refer back to the strict rule of the Chitrali Mehtar when the men doing "be•gār" ("forced labor") were often unable to get back to the valley to celebrate their festivals. Since 1969 the practice of "be•gār" has been stopped and the singers are implying that it is no longer because of any outside constraints that the young men are not participating, but because of their growing skepticism and lack of enthusiasm about their own cultural traditions.

At times during this festival, the orators became so annoyed with the behavior of some of the Kalaṣh men, who spent their time sitting around under trees next to the danceground rather than participating, that they would turn to them and shout things such as:

> What do you hope to find over there, sitting in the shade just like the Muslims?

On one occasion, an older gentleman shouted over to them:

> "A•laiy ǒ ki•a aī•ya•li ǯa•wa dai å?" - What are you doing over there? ( )ucking your mothers or something?

The songs at the spring festival also expressed the idea that the Kafir gods are becoming more and more distant as the Kalaṣh become increasingly "well...just all mixed up with the Muslims."

The presence of Muslim tourists during the 1977 summer dances in Brun, largest of the six Kalaṣh villages in Bomboret Valley, overshadowed all other activities. Large numbers of these men attended the dances and spent their entire evenings standing about on the peripherics, continually flashing their flashlights on and off into the faces of Kalaṣh girls doing their traditional dances, or playing them up and down their dresses. The cumulative effects of these and other forms of exploitation cannot but further erode all areas of traditional life. In Bomboret there has been a rise in petty thievery and fighting between villages, which is in direct contradiction to the pride which the Kalaṣh have traditionally taken in their lives of peace and co-operation. Tuberculosis epidemics in Bomboret have diminished livestock in the last three years. This has meant a decrease in nutritional levels in households whose animals have been affected and contributed to a rise in tuberculosis among the inhabitants. The transfer of lands and resources to non-Kalaṣh continues to create tensions of the kind already discussed. There are also an ever-increasing number of conversions to Islam, particularly among the young people. These factors point to an over-all decay of central social institutions, symbolized by the present state of disrepair of most of the clan temples and the menstrual huts, which the Kalaṣh claim they can no longer maintain without additional funds from the government.

iv) Social Change: Rombour:

The rather depressing situation in Bomboret, which is also found to a lesser extend in Birir, is tempered by the present cultural renaissance in Rombour Valley since the late 1960's or

early 1970's. In 1977, the road to Rombour was under construction, but, due to some hazardous geographical formations, the work has been proceeding slowly. There are fewer Muslims living in this valley than in the other two, and the Kalaṣh villages in Rombour function more as a single community than is possible in the other two valleys where habitation is far more spread out. The tuberculosis epidemic which was affecting dairy production in the other two valleys by 1977 had by now spread to Rombour. This fact, plus the availability of AID wheat and powdered milk, and the end of forced labour and the Kafir 'head-tax', has brought about an economic prosperity among those Rombour families who have manoevered to take full advantage of the present conditions.

The Rombour people observe their traditional beliefs and rituals more conscientiously than do the inhabitants of the other valleys. Because there are no roads there are still relatively few tourists and guests are put up in people's houses. As yet the Rombour Kalaṣh refuse to do such things as calling their women in from the fields to put on dances for tourists or government officials. Many of the Rombour men, including a few 'specialists' such as Kush Nawaz of the Ba•lḛ̆•ṙ̆ɕh clan, (Illustration #12) know the oral histories in astounding detail. The Rombour festivals are enriched with these ancestral songs to a degree now impossible in Bomboret, and, I suspect, in Birir. (See Illustration #12)

The practice of giving extravagant, optional merit feasts, (the focus of this thesis), had largely slipped into obscurity among the Kalash for a period of over half a century.

Since the 1950's, many of these feasts have been revived in Rombour. Once again men are seeking to distinguish themselves in this traditional mode, now made possible by an improvement in the standard of living combined with a sustained pride in traditional Kalaṣh customs. At some of these feasts in Rombour, I heard several people comment that there are a number of men in Birir or Bomboret who have the wealth necessary to perform

such feasts. However, the attitudes in those valleys are presently unfavourable towards this type of traditional competition for status and power. As a result of the Rombour feasts, several Rombour men indicated that they too had plans to host them, but it is too soon to tell whether their actions will have any influence in the other valleys. It is equally possible that the conditions in the other two valleys point to the future for Rombour. Despite the more encouraging signs , the road is coming to Rombour. There are some local men who are keen to join with Chitralis to build tourist hotels in the valley. More young people are converting to Islam, as well as some older men who have recently done merit feasts, and even renowned poets and singers. (See Appendix 1: Poetry and Metaphor). The differences between the three valleys may be only a matter of degree, and, in time, Rombour is likely to suffer the same fate. For now, it is beyond a doubt the last stronghold of Kafir religion and culture in the north-western region of the Indian sub-continent.

There is an interesting story about the principal deity of Rombour, Sajigor. In the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, one of the last of the great Kalaṣh kings, Raja Waiy of Bomboret, launched a successful raid into parts of former Kafiristan (Nuristan). A powerful shaman, Naṇga Dɛ̱har, was reputed to have been Raja Waiy's advisor during this campaign. According to the Kalash oral histories, while this shaman was in "Wɛ̱t•dɛ̱sh", the spiritual centre of Kafiristan, he became entranced and entered into a sacred dialogue with some of the local "Wɛ̱t•dɛ̱sh" deities. He then informed King Raja Waiy that the god Sajigor wished to be transferred back to Rombour Valley with the King's retreating army!

On the return journey, Naṇga Dɛ̱har ordered Raja Waiy to shoot two arrows, a black one and a red one, from where he stood on the mountain passes leading down into Rombour. Wherever the red one landed, Raja Waiy was ordered to build a "ba•shā•lḛ̆" a "women's menstrual hut", and where the black arrow was found he was to build an altar for Sajigor.

The black arrow landed beside a tree, (see Illustration #7) in a holly oak forest and, as the oral histories presently claim, the Kalaṣh warriors counted the number of leaves on the entire tree and then sacrificed a corresponding number of goats to consecrate the new altar. It was after this incident, fourteen generations ago, that King Raja Waiy brought Adabok, the apical ancestor of all seven present-day Rombour clans from Bomboret to settle in the valley at Grom village.

The point of this story is that Sajigor, while still living in "Wɛṭ·dɛ̄sh", prophesied that the Kafir tribes of the region which presently worshipped him would be over-run, the temples destroyed, and the people forcibly converted to Islam. The Kalaṣh version of this incident goes on to say that Sajigor foresaw in this prophecy that Rombour Valley would be the last stronghold on earth of Kafir culture and religion. If is for this reason that he wished to be brought back over the mountains with Raja Waiy's army and have an altar constructed for him in Rombour.

The bloody 1895-6 conversion to Islam in Kafiristan which reportedly left 10,000 killed and another 10,000 captive (later dispersed throughout other areas of Afghanistan), broke forever the power of the fiercely independent Kafir mountain kingdoms. As I have tried to illustrate in this introductory chapter, the present state of the Kalaṣh, themselves the remaining vestiges of Kafir culture, is a fragile one, particularly in two of the three valleys. There is a remarkable dramatic irony that the prophecy made by Sajigor about Rombour some four centuries ago appears to have been fulfilled.

This kind of profound cosmological reckoning frequently elicits enigmatic response by the Kalaṣh themselves of: "mai n' a·sā·luk hiu dai". Although difficult to translate, this expression means a feeling welling up from inside which longs for release from this earthly existence, literally, "I do not wish to remain on this earth any longer". In a culture where the word

for abject sorrow and untimate joy are one and the same, "pɛ̣·ri· shān" (actually a loan word from Urdu), one gets the sense that, for the Kalaṣh, the hand of fate holds a sharp, double-edged knife. One of the most poignant theme songs in the entire Kalaṣh oral tradition is about a young man who commits suicide on top of the coffin of his lover, who died during his absence in the summer pastures. He kills himself with a bone-white handled dagger. No one may leave the gathering of the Kalaṣh community at the annual spring festival until they have danced to this song, which is sung only once, toward the end of the festivities.

To leave before this dance would demonstrate a break with the solidarity and unity of the tribe. How a tragic love story came to be the symbol of the last vestiges of Kafir culture is yet a further irony.

When Kalaṣh orators find themselves moving from one song, by way of word association, to yet another and another song, they often employ a phrase which is a signal to the group that they wish to end their seemingly endless string of oral stories:

> Dri·ga ẓaiy uk, nā·si n' dra·nēu! Stories about the Kalaṣh, like "water flowing in a long irrigation channel, never come to an end".

Because no systematic account of the local ecology, economics, and social and political organization for the Kalaṣh is available, these topics are documented in Chapter Two as a prelude to the institution of merit feasting. In addition, as I indicate in Chapter Three, feasting for the Kalaṣh is more than a secular event. This chapter is concerned with the particulars of Sajigor who is the focus of the ritual activities in the merit feasts in the Rombour Valley. Though it is not possible to expand on the theme of religion in this thesis, the wealth of material available on one god alone indicates the rich possibilities for this subject.

The shamanic trance discussed at the end of Chapter Three forms the final sequence of events of the feast described in detail

in Chapter Five. I chose to include the material there in order to establish the feast as a religious experience. To illustrate this, I have reproduced translations from the dialogue which took place between the Kalaṣh and a shaman who was possessed by Sajigor. The reasons why the Kalaṣh see themselves partaking in this spiritual communication with the deity are explored at the end of Chapter Three.

Chapter Four begins by outlining the various reasons why the Kalash give feasts and then goes on to provide a compendium of the different kinds of feasts that a man may host if he has the ambition, the necessary wealth, and the required status.

Some of these feasts I watched first hand such as "sa·ri·ɣk", "shah ni·si", and "bira mor" (see Chapters Four and Five for details), others, which rarely occur nowadays were described to me by Kalaṣh informants, such as the "pi·mā·sā", "gõnt wass", and "sha·rū·gah". Contextual details are available only for those feasts I was able to witness myself. This accounts for the difference in the way which some of this material in Chapter Four has been presented.

Feasts are cultural performances, dramatic incidents during which the various artistic forms of the particular society are presented. They are also public forums and opportunities for men to gain or reinforce their power and prestige. The dynamics of these various activities are what I mean by contextual details, and it is these other dimensions of the feast which are explored in the fifth chapter. While I was working with the Kalaṣh a very influential man in Rombour, Kata Siŋg, hosted a feast which the local people claimed was the largest of this century. This feast, called "bira mor" ("the sacred male goat sacrifice"), was an opportunity to witness important men vie for greater power in Kalaṣh society. Throughout the thesis, references are made to the man Kata Siŋg and his clan, the Mu·ti·mi·rɕh, establishing how a man can achieve such a position in Kalaṣh culture.

CHAPTER 2 - The Setting

i) Geographical Location:

The geographical setting in which the Kalaṣh (and the other 'Kafir' tribes) live has had a profound effect upon their languages. (Jettmar, 1974:ix) As just one example of this, the Kalaṣh have more than half a dozen different names or metaphors for mountains. A description of the enviroment explains why this is so.

Through the length of their three narrow valleys flow snow-fed rivers which swell up and frequently flood during the summer thaw. The Bomboret/Rombour River meets the Chitral (Kunar) River at Ayun village and the Birir River joins the Kunar at Gahiret. Beside this brown, silt-laden, raging river, these tributaries seem like mere trickles. The Kunar then continues to flow swiftly westward, draining all the rivers from the western slopes of the Hindu Kush mountains, including the Bashgal and Pesh (Waigal/Prasun) Rivers. It joins the Kabul River at Jalalabad and the combination of these two waters flows into the Arabian Ocean near Karachi. which flows into the Indus

The tribal valleys lie in the rugged foothills of the Hindu Kush at altitudes between 1,500 and 2,400 metres. Bomboret, approximately nineteen kilometres long, is the largest valley. Rombour is by far the narrowest and least habitable; BIRIR in the winter months, because of the surrounding high hills some of its villages lose their direct sunlight by about two o'clock in the afternoon. These hills are streaked with a series of ancient pathways leading to summer residences in the upper fields, over passes to the Chitral and other Kafir valleys, and to the alpine summer pastures.

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*Between 2,700 and 3,000 metres, these hills are covered with stands of Asian pine and firs. The region is among the most densely forested in Northern Pakistan and logging is now closely surveilled by the local representatives of the state government. The Kalaṣh have lost virtual control of their own forests. They must apply through the authorities in Chitral to obtain cutting permits for chopping down trees to build their houses.

ii) The High Pastures:

Every year from the third week of May until the middle of October, the Kalash men take their goats to graze in the upper regions of the Hindu Kush mountains. Early in the season they use pastures which lie at about 3,600 metres and, as these become depleted throughout the summer, the men move the livestock up as high as 4,350 metres. After a brief description of the flora and fauna of this region, I will discuss the details of these herding activities.

The mountains still abound with many species of wild birds and animals including the markhor (an indigenous species of wild goat), ibex, bear, fox, leopards, ground hogs, monkeys (on the western slopes), falcons, eagles, several different kinds of partridges, and the beautiful crowned iridescent Himalayan monal (pheasant), whose feathers are a highly prized commodity for Kalash ceremonial dress.

The alpine flora is quite sparse. Willow, rhododendron, and broom end at about 3,600 metres. Above this are found the occasional stream-fed grassy patches often covered in alpine flowers. There are a variety of low, thorny shrubs, a small, thin-barked birch-type tree called "pŭr•ē" and a scattering of the perennial juniper tree "sā•rus", which sometimes occurs in stands or groves.

For the Kalash, juniper is one of the most important resources. Not only does it provide alpine fodder for the goats and is the staple of the wild markhor, but it is cut and brought down into the valleys for a variety of other uses. Its ashes are mixed with tobacco to make "nas•wār", "chewing tobacco", to which many Kalash people are fervently addicted. Moreover, "sā•rus", "juniper" has a highly sacred value. It is burnt during most Kalash ritual purification ceremonies, the scent of its

*"Pŭr•ē (muut)", "tree", has a very fine, paper-like bark that is taken off in strips and used to line the willow-bark cheese moulds which flavors the cheese.

smoke being likened to the smell of the gods. Wild markhor, which the Kalash believe are the sacred herds of the mountain fairies, subsist on juniper. When these wild animals are hunted and then butchered, their long-haired coats and intestines reek of juniper odor. To this smell the Kalash also assign a divine quality.

Juniper therefore, is a sacred substance with multiple dimensions; it is the staple of the sacred herds of the mountain fairies and its odor, given off by these creatures or when burnt at purification rituals elicits the presence of the gods. From this example one can see that over the millenium, living in these powerful mountain settings, the religious symbolism of the Kalash who were originally horsemen from the grasslands of the Central Asian Steppes, has undergone a profound transformation.

The high pastures are held by the major lineages of the various clans, under a system of stewardship rather than outright private ownership as lands down in the valley are held. The first settlers in the various pasture areas establish their claims. However, due to the nature of the activity, the holdings shift as an area becomes depleted through over-grazing after several seasons of use. Some Kalash shepherds now claim that in the past, fewer men owned much larger herds of goats. Presently, most men have at least twenty goats (or more) which they pool together with other clansmen into groups of three to four hundred animals. It requires at least two men to care for this many goats. Twenty years ago in an area called "Chi•mik sŏn/pasture" used by certain clans in Rombour, there were only two corrals with their adjoining shepherds quarters. (Illustration #4) However, nowadays in this same area, there are seven corrals.

If men from other lineages or clans want to bring their

*If a goat returns to the sheds at night with juniper stains on its head or horns, it is believed to have had contact with the fairies and Kalash custom prescribes that it be sacrificed immediately.

goats to a particular pasture, they must consider the grazing potential of the pastures in lieu of how many animals they have and how many are already in the area. They must also obtain permission from the other families using these alpine pastures. If during one summer, an area becomes completely grazed out, shepherds are forced to approach men in other parts of the mountains and ask them if they may pool their herds. When men mix their goats, they do not mix their milk or other dairy products.

Unless men are unmarried or are full-time contracted shepherds, they usually do twenty-day stints in the pastures after which they bring the cheese products to their houses down in the valleys. If several brothers are working a herd and have not split their house or assets, the products go to the one joint family. However, if this family has disbanded, one household gets all the dairy products for one twenty-day period, and for the next period the other brother's house will receive it.

Some men hire themselves as full-time shepherds either for one or three year contracts. Under the first arrangement, they receive from their employer grains, clothing, and three full-grown female goats a year which they prefer to take in the early spring when they are pregnant. In a three-year contract, a man gets his food, clothing, tobacco, and all the baby goats born in the flock on the third year. If for some reason they should die of disease that year, then the owner will give the shepherd the one-year olds from the previous year.

The goats are brought back down to winter in the valley sheds in mid-October, but only after the local valley government (See Chapter 2, Section 5) has given its permission. A fine of two full-grown goats is imposed if the animals are brought down too soon.

Many of the peaks that tower above these pastures are over 6,000 metres high and remain snow-covered the year round. Between these heights there are a series of passes which lead to Afghanistan. In the summer, the Nuristanis come over these

passes to rustle the Kalash goats. In pre-conversion times, a large number of goats were needed to give the extravagant merit feasts and for this reason raiding became an institution that has continued to this day.

In October, 1977, the Kom Nuristanis from the lower Bashgal in Afghanistan staged a daring attmept to steal about three thousand goats from three of the Kalash grazing areas. The Nuristanis were heavily armed with much more sophisticated weapons than the Kalash. However, the latter, standing to lose a great deal more, had the advantage of being able to travel more quickly than the robbers, who moved slowly herding their booty in front of them. The Kalash were able to get above them and, in a five-hour gun battle on Majam, the last pass before descending into the Bashgal, (in which at least five Nuristanis were killed), they succeeded in re-capturing their herds. A large portion of these goats were for the merit feast to be held the following month. The feast-giver, one of the eighty Rombour men who went to retrieve the goats, was later celebrated in in his own feast, although necessarily in rather a circumspect manner, as a "man-killer", "shu ra moch". This status, discussed in Chapter 4, is one of the most highly recognized in traditional Kafir society.

iii) Seasonal Activities in the Lowland Valleys:

Growing in the valleys at altitudes up to 2,400 metres is a rich variety of flora including stands of walnut, mulberry, apricot, apple, pear, peach, sallow, and holly (stone) oak trees, plus an abundance of ancient grape vines.

The new branches of the holly oak provide the main fodder for the herds wintering in the lower valleys.* The stands of oak which are on private property are used by the owners. Other trees are part of communal grazing areas, "mush•tyā•ruk•gum•tā",

*Stone oak branches are symbolic of the Household Goddess, Jeshṭak, and therefore considered sacred. Branches of holly oak are used as an alternative to juniper in religious ceremonies that are concerned with "women's" activities such as childbirth, presenting the new-born to the community, marriages, etc.

which are marked off by large stones whose boundaries are common knowledge. These communal hillsides are themselves sectioned off and, for conservation purposes, some portions are closed off for a five-year period and then opened for three. Every spring, there are seven to eight young men chosen from each clan, (these numbers refer only to Rombour Valley), who throughout the year guard those sections of the community forests that are closed. A shepherd is fined one goat for every day he permits his animals to graze in such an off-limits area.* As payment for their services, the young men receive larger portions of meat and skins from animals which are collected as fines.

The cold season begins in late October and heavy snow starts to fall in late December or early January. In the winter of 1976-77, the most severe in over sixty years, snow fell in some parts of the Kalash valleys to a depth of one and a half metres. In these lower reaches of the Hindu Kush the thaw occurs in March and marks the onset of agricultural activities.

Throughout the winter months, manure is deposited on the ground inside the sheds which house hundreds of goats. As soon as the snow has melted this manure is dumped out by the basketful onto the fields. Winter wheat, planted the previous November, is the first to be fertilized. Heavy rain falls in March and April and the wheat crop does not need irrigating until early May. Next, the fields of corn, (a crop which was introduced into the area within the last century), are fertilized in the same manner. This type of work is done by the men, organized into daily communal work-bees. Usually these men are the clan brothers of the person whose fields are being tilled or any other friends willing to lend a hand, usually in return for a similar favor. Custom prescribes that the men are fed two generous meals during the day,

*During a particularly severe winter, a shepherd might be forced to forfeit some of his goats as fines by grazing them on closed portions of the communal forests than lose an even greater number by starvation.

of crushed walnuts mixed with feta cheese on fresh bread which the women prepare throughout the work-bee.

Gujars very often winter in the Kalash valleys. They are a North Indian nomadic, herding peoples speaking a dialect of Hindustani, who have migrated from the Kashmir area slowly westwards as far as Afghanistan. They do no agriculture and exchange their dairy products, goat meat, and hides to lowland people in exchange for grain. Many of them, at least in the Chitral region, are bitterly poor. In exchange for giving the Kalash some milk or occasionally meat, the latter sometimes permit the Gujars to winter in their summer residences which would otherwise lie vacant during the cold season when the Kalash remain in their villages. The Gujars' goats also produce a substantial amount of manure over the winter that is used by the Kalash on their fields in the spring, a most organic form of paying rent! The Gujars also often assist their Kalash "landlords" to spread the manure before they migrate to the higher pastures for the next six months.

Repairing the irrigation channels, making new fields, ploughing and planting, (the latter activity is too strenuous for women because huge holly oak branches must be dragged over the seeds after sowing to protect them from birds), are the agricultural activities performed by the Kalash men. From then on, agriculture becomes the sole responsibility of the women.*

Except for the occasional lightening storm and flash flood in summer, the skies usually remain clear throughout the growing season, with temperatures in July and August going into the thirties on the Celsius scale. By May, the entire agricultural endeavor depends upon an extensive and efficient irrigation system. During the hot summer months, when watering the crops (corn, and later on,

*In Nuristan, the Kafir women traditionally took responsibility for most of these heavier tasks such as the ploughing. In fact, Kafiri women were reputed to be substituted sometimes for draught animals. Robertson, however, denies this, and states that the main prohibition was against men touching the plow. (1896:550)

millet) every second or third day is critical, the brilliant sunshine melts the snows in the upper reaches of the Hindu Kush. This heavy run-off feeds the rivers and fills the irrigation channels, some of which run up to six and a half kilometres and water three to five fields.

The anthropological literature on societies that depend on extensive hydraulic systems points to a correspondingly high degree of social organization for the smooth running of these complex operations. The Kalash are no exception. Annually, just before the spring festival, village teams or work groups of those people whose fields are dependent upon a particular water system are organized to repair the channels. One man is retained afterwards to keep the larger channels operative. During the harvest, he receives half a "maun" or twenty-one kilos of grain from each family whose fields are irrigated by that channel.

Women whose fields lie on the same channel must come to some formal agreement between themselves as to how they will share the water. In areas where water is in short supply this can sometimes lead to conflicts between them Initially this consists of hurling verbal insults at one another. "You prostitute!" is a popular one. If the fields are drying out badly these tensions will escalate; the men give wry descriptions of hair-pulling incidents, or women striking out at each other with their metal-tipped digging hoes.* At this point, one of the men will step in and approach the husband of the other woman. If the

*The association between water and women in the secular realm is also carred into the sacred one. Women cannot put a common water vessel to their mouths, but use their left hand cupped against their mouth as an intermediary 'channel'. At the winter solstice festival, a ritual is done by men which makes women 'pure' for a period of four days. After this ceremony women return to their houses and pour out all the water brought up earlier from the river, an act which symbolizes their pure state. But this is an entirely relative status and women never become 'pure' enough to eat male goat meat, or go to the god sites or goat sheds.

issue still cannot be settled, the "respected valley elders", ("ga·dǧiy·ra·khan") become involved.

iv) Local Decision-Making Bodies:

These elders are men who have a thorough knowledge of the local history, economics, and the social and political relationships in the whole valley. It is not enough to know the clan geneologies. They must have taken an active interest in community issues since their early adult years. Knowledge about landholdings, how they were acquired, from whom, and for how much may initially be an asset to the individual himself, but over time, the accumulation of this type of information becomes of value to the whole community. Usually when a man is forty to fifty years old, he has acquired a broad enough knowledge to be useful to the community, and becomes informally recognized and referred to as "ga·dǧiy·ra·khan". Men who spend most of their time away from the social and political life of the community, for example, shepherds who tend goats year round in the high pastures, rarely assume this kind of role.

Most often the 'elders' do not wait to be called upon but step in voluntarily when they see a potentially volatile situation emerging. In difficult situations, in an attempt to achieve peace, these mediators will sometimes set a stringent fine called "za·na·mat". This fine is held out as a threat to force the disputants to settle their differences. If one side or the other continues to perpetuate the quarrel and contravene the solutions suggested by the "elders", then those offenders must pay the fine.

v) Policing:

While discussing the subject of local law enforcement, it is appropriate to mention the "roǰy", the valley police or 'magistrates'. During the growing season, it is the job of these men to see that there is no theft of the ripening fruit, vegetables, or grains in the valley. The ban on picking produce until the "roǰy" have given their united consent is called "dēn". The "roǰy" are also instrumental in deciding when and how the

goats should be herded to and from the high pastures, after taking into consideration such factors as over-grazing and the protection of ripening crops.

The men that make up the "roiy" are annually appointed on the first day of the spring festival dance celebrations by the 'elders', from amongst whom these magistrates may also be chosen. This is done in a ceremony at the god-site of Mahandeo which invests the position with a sacred importance. If chosen, an individual cannot refuse, but generally he is proud to have been selected. The potential candidates must have the reputation as being honest and trustworthy and be known as individuals who themselves conscientiously observe the "dĕn".

The number of "roiy" varies from valley to valley. In Rombour there are four* who are representatives of each of the major clans. In Bomboret, two men are appointed from each of the five villages, the same number as in Birir, despite the latter being a much smaller valley, but where the "dĕn" is very strictly enforced. The job entails spending many evenings and sometimes entire nights during the growing season patrolling the valley, particularly in areas where there is an abundance of fruit trees, on the look-out for thieves. Small, purposeful groups of teen-age boys are the anathema of the "roiy". The reason why there are so many "roiy" in Birir is due to the abundance of grapes, a fruit very difficult to watch because bunches will ripen at different times. In Bomboret and Rombour, the job usually ends when everyone has gone to bed, whereas in Birir, the "roiy" are notorious for staying up to prowl about all night.

Anyone caught violating the "dĕn" will be severely beaten

*Parkes reports that in Rombour there are five "roiy", one representative from each of the major clans. The discrepancy with my information is perhaps because two of the major clans in this valley are represented in two of the villages and that two of the five villages are small and so close as to be considered as one unit for some purposes. (Parkes in Palwal 1977:123)

if he (they) can be caught, and a fine of one goat is later extracted from the offender. As payment for their services, the "roiy" get the skins from these animals, and the skins of any animals sacrificed at the god-sites throughout the year at the various annual ceremonies. This often comes to a total of forty to sixty skins.

When the "dĕn" ("ban") is lifted on the various fruits and grains as they ripen throughout the season, the people quickly harvest their produce, sun-dry it, and then put it inside their houses or storage huts for winter consumption. This job must be accomplished quickly because as soon as the "dĕn" is lifted, regardless if the trees are standing on communal or private property, everyone can help themselves. Only after the fruit has been picked and layed out to dry in the sun does it become the property of any particular individual. If, however, the trees happen to be owned by the Muslims in Chitral, who usually acquired them originally as credit against loans which the Kalash later failed to make good, then the products are not free for the taking. For example, at the grape harvest in Birir the Chitralis come to the valley, load up donkey trains of the ripened fruit and transport it to Chitral, Ayun and other towns in the Chitral Valley.

The women see to it that the agricultural foodstuffs are made to last until spring, whereas the men control the butchering of animals and the distribution of the dairy products to guests and household members.

vi) Landholding: (Economy)

The Kalash have two basic types of land transaction other than direct inheritance between men of the same partiline. One type is called "gir·a·wē", a 'temporary' sale wherein a person owning land may turn over the use of a piece of property to a creditor as collateral for a cash loan. The loan is usually for much less than the real value of the land and the creditor must return the land once the loan has been made good. Because

the Kalaṣh are non-literate, there are no written records of such transactions. The system depends on the verbal testimony of a witness "bɛ·ga·rus", and therefore works best within the Kalaṣh community. In similar dealings with the Muslims, the bonds of trust between fellow tribesmen are missing and a Kalaṣh may find himself in a lengthy court proceeding in Chitral before he can recover, if at all, his "gir·a·wē" lands. The second type of transaction, called "ba·ya·ka·tē", is an outright sale of land at an agreed upon price, with no future return to the original owner.

The measure of land for the Chitral District is called "cha·gōr·um" in Khowar or "cha·kaiy" (Persian - "ji·rēip") in Kalaṣh valleys. Forty years ago, one could purchase a "cha·gor·um" for four to five hundred Rupees (about forty to fifty dollars). In Bomboret Valley, the year before the road was opened (in 1975), it was up to eight hundred dollars and the government forced it up even higher to one thousand dollars a "cha·gor·um" when private lands that the road was to be built on were purchased. The most recent 1979 government price has gone up to 15,000 Rupees per one "cha·kaiy". Between the Kalaṣh themselves, especially between clan brothers, the cost is much lower. For example, in 1977 in Rombour Valley, a man sold a piece of land that was two "cha·kaiy" on which grew six apricot, and two walnut trees, plus two grape vines, for 1,500 Rupees (one hundred and fifty dollars). The buyer was one of his own clansmen.

In Kalaṣh valleys, one "cha·kaiy" of land, with an input of twenty kilos of wheat seed, can annually yield about five hundred kilos of grain. Double-cropping after the wheat has been harvested will produce about eight hundred and forty kilos of corn annually. Alternatively millet may be used as the second crop. Fields are not left fallow and cultivation is done under continually depleted soil conditions. A minimum of six "cha·kaiy" are required for an extended household, called "ku·shūn", to

remain self-sufficient in grains from season to season. (A more detailed discussion on the composition of these households follows in Section viii.)

Some families own enough land to produce their own grain requirements throughout the year. The head of such a household is called "cha·ra·da moch", a "man whose harvests last season to season."

The largest landowner in Rombour Valley is a Kalaṣh Shaikh, (convert to Islam), Abdul Salam of the Dra·mɣ·sɛ clan whom I was told, has about forty "cha·kaiy". I suspect, however, that this is somewhat of an over-estimate. Kata Sing, who gave a large merit feast in November, 1977, owns about ten "cha·kaiy", upon which, for six years, he, his sons, his two wives and eldest daughter grew large grain surpluses which were stored for the feasting celebrations.

The economy of the Kalaṣh valleys is still based predominately upon a kinship idiom. Inter-clan barter and exchange occurs notably between affines (See Chapter 2, Section xiii) but the extended families and lineages, which comprise a larger clan grouping, typically balance out between themselves their shortages and surpluses, e.g. walnuts or cheese for grain, or honey for grapes and wine, etc.

However, the use of money is definitely increasing and is occasionally demanded as part of the bride price, anywhere from 500 to 2,000 Rupees ($50 - 200).

The tourist industry, government positions such as border patrol, day labor on roads and irrigation projects, private day wages from logging for Chitrali Muslims, and wages earned by the few young Kalaṣh men who travel to "down Pakistan" and work on construction sites in Karachi, Lahore, or Peshawar, infuse the Kalaṣh economy with a certain but still limited amount of ready cash. This money buys certain essentials (and now, increasingly, luxury goods) not produced locally such as salt, cotton cloth for the men, women's jewellery, kerosene, socks and shoes, sugar, tea, wrist watches, household utensils, eye glasses,

false teeth and of course the 'king' of consumer goods, the still relatively scarce transistor radio.

vii) Architecture:

The Kalaṣh live in villages perched on the hillsides above the valley basins, both for defense purposes in a historically hostile environment, and to conserve arable land.* The smallest villages have about a dozen houses and the largest, such as Brun in Bomboret Valley, thirty-five. These houses, either one or two stories high, (with or without enclosed verandahs depending upon the wealth of the owner) are made of piled stones braced between horizontal wooden beams and then caulked with mud. The flat roofs** which often serve as verandahs for the houses below are made of roughly hewn wooden planks placed side by side, and then covered over with a mixture of dirt and soot which becomes quite water-proof after repeated pounding. During the heavy snow or spring rains, the roofs may leak if not pounded sufficiently.

The interiors of these windowless, one-room houses are naturally lit only through a small smoke hole and a single door, left open during the day. Thick black soot, accumulated from years of burning fires, covers the wall, ceiling and rafters, and frequently drops onto uncovered foodstuffs or persons seated below. The ceilings are supported inside by four centrally located, equi-distant carved wooden pillars. Within the area thus demarcated most of the household activities: cooking, eating, and socializing take place. The fire-pit, "in•grok",

*Chitrali Muslims have gradually occupied some of the most fertile lowland areas in the Kalaṣh valleys, where they have built their houses. These are surrounded by walled-in gardens in which their women work, observing the Muslim practice of seclusion called "rā•poush" in Khowar. The Chitralis prefer rice as their staple, which they grow on these well-irrigated lowlands. The Kalaṣh never cultivate rice and rarely consume it.

**The roofs on houses which contain clan altars have special Central Asian lantern-type smoke-holes. These, plus the roofs of clan temples and the goat-sheds are called "on•jesh•ta drā•mi", "sacred roof" and are at all times strictly out of bounds to women.

is made from slabs of grey slate sunk into the ground in the centre.* The back wall of the house, dedicated to the Household/Clan Goddess Jeshṭak, is adorned with the horns of sacrificed goats and holly oak branches. The area between this wall and the fire-pit is called "on•jesh•ta wah", "sacred space". Women's genitals, believed to be polluted and dangerous, must never pass over this space.

Household furnishings consist of no more than the essentials; cooking pots and a wooden storage trunk or perhaps a small, tin box pushed under the beds. These beds, cots strung with goat-hair ropes, line the walls on either side of the room extending back from the outer perimetres of the central pillars. A house approximately three and a half metres wide by four and a half metres long is typically arranged with four or five cots which sleep two to three persons each.

viii) Social Organization: (Introduction)

The average household numbers from eight to twelve in an extended family called "ku•shūn". Varying of course from situation to situation, a "ku•shūn" might typically be comprised of a father, (his brothers usually if they are much younger or unmarried), his wife or wives, and their children, plus the wives and children of any of their married sons.**

There are few Kalaṣh men who have two wives, this practice generally being limited both for emotional and financial reasons.

*The household fire is not defined as 'sacred' probably because it is constantly tended by women. There is, however, a certain respectful attitude observed towards it. Garbage or soiled food cannot indiscriminately be tossed into it, nor can the leftover bones of domesticated animals be thrown in. However, the bones of markhor, ibex, or any of the wild game birds are always thrown into the household fire.

**In Bomboret there are a total of 110 "ku•shūns" and in Rombour there are 83. Unfortunately, I do not have the equivalent figure for Birir where the situation is different in that, comparatively, there are more individuals living together in one commensal unit than in the other two valleys.

Unlike the Muslims who usually have separate domiciles for each wife, two Kalaṣh wives live under one roof and this frequently creates tension. The Kalaṣh are very suspicious about problems created as a result of women being dissatisfied, which can bring bad luck to the household. These kinds of disruptions are called "strī•ja u•bāt", "trouble created by dissatisfied women."

The "ku•shūn", a patrilocal, patrilineally extended family is the smallest unit of the Kalaṣh clan structure. Economically, it functions as the main productive unit in the round of daily work activities. The Kalaṣh social system demands that the extended family work units produce more than their own subsistence needs. Surplus foodstuffs are required to fulfill the social/ritual function associated with the ceremonies that mark the rites of passage of the household members from birth to death. Other households within the same lineage branch or wider clan, "kum", must also share in the responsibility of sponsoring these various ceremonies. A family or clan that economizes on these expenditures loses prestige in the eyes of the community.

The head of the household is the most senior male, who has absolute authority within the "ku•shūn", and also exercises a degree of control over the actions of the closely related lineages. For example, if a grown man's cousin or nephew on his father's (or brother's) side is of marriagable age, he will freely offer suggestions as to the choice of the bride. When the boy's father is arranging the bride-price the lineages that make up the clan are obligated to contribute whatever objects, livestock, and/or foodstuffs that they can. These individual household heads also have a say in the feasibility of larger events such as merit feasts that might be proposed by clan members belonging to other lineage branches in one "kum" (clan). These are major socio-economic undertakings which require the cooperation of the entire clan for their successful planning and execution.

Mutual cooperation is the goal of each clan and the key to their social, economic, and political success. A metaphor

used to symbolize the solidarity of the clan brothers is "wa•sun•gaiy būr", the "arrow sheath" of the successful hunter or warrior. (See Appendix 1: Poetry and Metaphor for some other poetic terms which describe clan solidarity and prosperity.)

viii) Social Organization: (Clan Structure)

All the men in Rombour Valley can be traced back to one apical ancestor, Adabok, who was settled there by King Raja Waiy in the late fifteenth century. Adabok had four sons and it is from the grandsons of these four men that the seven distinct "kum" in Rombour have descended. If one was considering only the Rombour situation, the word "kum" could appropriately be translated as "major lineage". However, in the other two valleys Birir and Bomboret, these distinct groups cannot be traced back to one location of a single apical male ancestor. The whole tribal community recognizes the same corporate identities for all of the distinct clans in all three valleys, regardless of the fact that some of these "kum", as in Rombour, can be traced back to a single male ancestor. "Kum" must be translated as "clan" to give it accuracy for all three valleys and to give it the greatest concurrence with the local definition. The discussion on the Bomboret situation will make clearer this choice of definition.

I am not familiar with any Kalaṣh terms which specifically define the kinship units larger than the household ("ku•shūn") and smaller than the clan ("kum"), such as minor or major lineage segments, except by reference to a few notable male ancestors, particularly those who performed the merit feasts in their life-times. All clan brothers, regardless of how closely or distantly they are related, e.g. whether they belong to the same lineage branch or another of the same clan, are called "da•i•ruk". This is an interesting term because it denotes the constant fluidity in these types of ever-expanding kinship systems. For example, "da•i•ruk" is also a term applied to men who are related through a common ancestor older than the man who is recognized as the clan founder. Members of the Dra•mɛ•sɛ clan in Rombour (See the Geneological Charts at the end of the thesis on the Dra•mɛ•sɛ), will

sometimes refer to those descendents from the Wa•ko•kaiy clan (See Wa•kok in the chart), as "da•i•ruk". This is done in recognition that both the Wa•ko•kaiy and the Dra•mɛ•sɛ (and Ba•gā•li•ā), have all descended from Ba•kar who is recognized as an important ancestor. Bakar was the father of Wa•kok and the great uncle of Dra•mɛ sɛ. These three Rombour clans, Dra•mɛ•sɛ, Wa•ko•kaiy, and Ba•gā•li•ā are often referred to in the oral histories as "Ba•kar na•wouw", "the grandsons of Ba•kar".

All those kinship groups who have achieved recognition as distinct clans are strictly exogamous. Im Rombour some of the clans, for example, the Dra•mɛ•sɛ and the Ba•lɛ̆•ř̆ɛ̆h, now have lineage branches living in two different villages. Thus it can be said of Rombour, that the clans transcend the village. As will be discussed later, this is not the case in Bomboret. Because clans are exogamous the possibilities of who one might marry within the village are more limited in Rombour. For example, if there are only two clans in a village and one is ego's patrilineage (which he/she must not marry into within seven generations) and the other is his/her mother's natal clan (who one must not marry into within five generations) then, if ego is a female, she must marry outside the village. If ego is a male in this instance, he must bring his wife from another village. Because two clans in Rombour are found in more than one village, suitable marriage partners are more often sought from outside the valley.

Unlike Rombour, clans in Bomboret do not transcend the village. Two or three of the twelve distinct clans in Bomboret are exclusive to one of each of the five Kalash villages in that valley.* Major lineage branches, separated over time by a minimum of seven generations may technically inter-marry. It is this act,

*One possible exception to this is the Bu•lɛ sin•ga clan who resides both in Brun and Sarikjouw villages. However, Sarikjouw is virtually only a summer residence, and the inhabitants also have houses in Brun which they move back to in the winter.

often resisted despite its legality, which serves as a catalyst in having a major lineage recognized as a separate exogamous clan. The Ku•ṭu•waiy clan (meaning "people of the small, summer cottage"), which was previously a major lineage of the prestigious Bad•že•kaiy clan in Brun, Bomboret, is presently undergoing this kind of re-formulation into a distinct clan and are of late marrying Bad•že•kaiy.

Moreover, unlike Rombour, in both Bomboret and in Birir (although I do not have specific examples from this area) the clans cannot be traced back to a single apical ancestor. The oral histories reveal that some of the present-day clans in Bomboret came from quite different localities, one example already mentioned is the Bu•lɛ•siŋ•ga of Brun, descendents of King Bu•lɛ•siŋ•ga of the ancient town of Kari, eleven kilometres north of Chitral. Another example is the Shāri•na•wouw clan of Darasguru village in Bomboret who, probably due to pressures from encroaching Kho groups, came from a place in Upper Chitral at the time of Raja Waiy. According to the oral histories, a stick that the Shāri•na•wouw stuck into the ground grew leaves overnight. This convinced the King of their magical powers, and they were permitted to settle in the valley.

Allowing for a certain hierarchical stratification between clans, (a point I shall take up later) the Kalash give full recognition to the solidarity of the clans in the three valleys regardless of different geographical origins and common unilineal descent or the lack of it. Each clan has a separate altar dedicated to the Household Goddess, Jeshṭak, which is kept either in her "han", "temple" or, if the clan is small and cannot afford the expenditure that is required to build and consecrate a Jeshṭakhan ('temple'), then the altar will be kept on the

*The clan altars are made of carved, wooden horse-heads attached to a wooden board incised with a cross-hatched design and decorated with holly oak branches, the symbol of Jeshṭak. (Illustration #5)

mantlepiece in one of the clan member's houses. Some clans share their temples, particularly if they have branched off from a common apical ancestor some centures before. Men of rank from each clan must be given their due respect at all the merit feasts. Also, each clan (except in Birir) has the responsibility of sponsoring an annual 'thanksgiving' feast called "prā•cheish"* held at the god-site in the name of the apical male ancestor of the clan.

These distinct corporate clan groups are the principal organizational units at the village, valley and tribal community levels for all the major social, political, and economic institutions. Marriage for example, is wholly guided by principles of the Kalash clan structure. Each of these patrilineal clans is strictly exogamous within seven generations on the father's side and for five generations on the mother's side, a point which I will take up in more detail later. The rules of exogamy regarding the patrilineage are enforced by a strict threat of excommunication from the entire Kalash community if they are broken. Individuals marrying too closely within seven generations in their patrilineage violate the incest rules and are thereafter called "bai•ra". In Kalash valleys today there are actually some incidents of these incestuous type marriages. These people live at some distance form the regular Kalash villages and, not unexpectedly, are nowadays all converts to Islam. The marriage rules of the Muslim system are tolerant of close marriages, giving preference to certain parallel cousin marriages. Kalash female agnates remain associated with their natal clans (father's/brother's) throughout their lives. In the Muslim system, if ego is a male, the preferred marriage choice is father's sister's daughter. For the Kalash this is marrying into one's own patri-

*In Bomboret, this feast is done at Mahandeo, and in Rombour at Sajigor. Nowadays, some clans which used to do "prā•cheish" can no longer afford to, and other clans have discontinued the practice because of changing priorities and a growing lack of willingness, particularly in Bomboret, to spend one's wealth on traditional customs.

lineage and considered "n' wɛsh", a "violation of custom", punishable by excommunication with the status of "bai•ra".*

From the contextual evidence, however, which came to light while recording the Kalash oral traditions, it became evident that "bai•ra" is somewhat of an ambiguous term. There is some indication that, historically, those people who became "bai•ra" did not inevitably also become Muslims. More likely they became the personal slaves of certain high status or wealthy Kalash individuals. This brings up an important point of hierarchical stratification between the various socio-economic groups in Kalash society. This situation can best be understood comparatively with reference to Kafiristan west of the Hindu Kush prior to the 1896 conversion.

ix) Social Hierarchy:

Amongst those tribes, notably the Waigalis and the Bashgalis, society was divided into three or four major classes, within which the various individual clans were hierarchically arranged. The main divisons were between the freemen, the wealthy "atrozān" aristocracy, and their slaves called "ba•ri".** In the Bashgali village of Kamdesh (Kombrom), the "atrozān" was comprised of six very wealthy and prestigious clans, one of which produced the hereditary priest, "Utah". (Robertson, 1896:85) The warriors and the fighting men, although coming from all groups, were only recognized by the appropriate "man-killer" merit feasts if they were from this nobleman class. The two middle classes, sometimes more difficult to distinguish from each other (and from the "atrozān" or "ba•ri" depending on which end of the scale they

*It is not surprising that, probably partially due to their marriage practices, the Kalash consider the Muslims impure and restrict them from their villages during the most sacred of their festivals and rituals.

**Palwal mentions a group of house slaves "La•ŋɛ" who were a group comprised of either war captives or criminals, and not wealthy enough to pay a fine, were forced to become slaves in the house of the man whose rights he (they) had violated. (1977:55)

fell) were most importantly, however, viewed as free men. The "ba•ri" were, and still are, the lowest group although technically equal (since 1896) according to the central Islamic premise of 'brotherhood'. These people are craftsmen who traditionally provided essential services 'free of charge' to their "atrozān" masters (Ibid:100). They are the wood-carvers and house builders, smiths, jewellers, potters, basket-makers and leather workers.

Robertson noted, without going into detail, that not all slaves were of the same social position (Ibid:99) and, more specifically for the Waigal Valley, Schuyler Jones differentiated this slave 'caste' into two groups, the "ba•ri" and an even more inferior social category "sĕwala". (1974:46) The latter performed the less prestigious (and less 'pure') functions of potting, making baskets, and working with leather. In pre-conversion times even the "ba•ri" would not inter-marry with the "sĕwala".

Some of the other tasks delegated to the pre-1897 "ba•ri" include: carving the wooden graveyard effigies commemorating those persons who gave merit feasts during their lives; assisting at animal sacrifices, particularly for cows which were exclusively the "ba•ri's" task to skin and butcher; and beating drums or playing pipes at festivals and funerals. The "ba•ri", considered to be impure, were forbidden to enter temples or approach the sacred hearth in their hereditary priest's house. They lived in the lower regions of the villages at some distance from the other residences.*

The question must now be posed as to what similarities or differences exist between the situation we have just been discussing and the Kalaṣh. Both historically and geographically, the Bashgalis and the Kalaṣh are quite closely linked, commonly

*It is not unexpected that these proscriptions and prescriptions resemble features of the present-day Hindu caste system, ie. untouchability. As mentioned, the Kafirs are Aryans) the remains of Vedic peoples who became isolated and gradually transmuted in response to their new alpine environment.

grouped under a term "Siah Posh Kafirs", "wearers of the black robe".* There appears to be some definite functional similarities between the Kalaṣh category "bai•ra" and the Bashgali denomination of "ba•ri". The Kalaṣh oral histories make specific reference to the "bai•ra" working as slaves for their Kalaṣh masters. For example, there is a well-known story in Rombour in which Ma•go•kān, one of the sons of Adabok, the founder, gave to his brother Sum•ba•rā, all of the family slaves ("bai•ra") but took as his share of the inheritance the most fertile valley lands. Sum•ba•rā proceeded to have these sixty "bai•ra" build a four mile long irrigation channel.** It is doubtful that this large group of slaves were all incestuous outcastes and when my informant was questioned about this‡ he replied they were the "Ba•la•lik", those autochthonous persons who were subjugated by the Kalaṣh when they migrated into the area. This corresponds with Robertson's observations about the "ba•ri" that:

> "a portion of them at any rate, are probably remnants of an ancient people subjugated and enslaved by the present dominant (Kafir) tribes (1896:82)...and partially descendents of prisoners (from other Kafir tribes) taken in war." (Ibid:99)

The people displaced by the Bashgali Kafirs were called Jazhis, (Ibid:82) which Morgenstierne maintains is another name for the "Ba•la•lik" ("Jashi"). (1973:161) There is no mention in any of the Kafir literature as to the kinship structure of these

*This term refers to a somewhat obvious similarity and often has been used more for convenience rather than as a definite scientific category.

**This channel called "sū•ā žai" (golden channel), constructed in the sixteenth century, still supplies the upper fields in Rombour with water. Sum•ba•rā was the grandfather of Mu•ti•mir, the apical ancestor of the present day Mu•ti•mi•rṃclan which lives in the upper village of Kalaṣhagrom and whose fields are watered by the "sū•ā žai" channel. Kata Sing, the man who hosted the largest merit feast in fifty years in November, 1977, belongs to the Mu•ti•mi•rṃclan and also owns fields along this channel.

‡Saifullah Jan, Ba•gā•li•ā clan, Balanguru village, Rombour.

ancient peoples, nor are there any specific references to the kinship structure or marriage rules of the Bashgali "ba•ri". I would suggest that the latter, being socially inferior and unsuitable as marriage partners to the 'free' classes, were most likely endogamous by force of circumstance if not by social preference.

With regard to the Kalaṣh situation, there is a village in Bomboret called Kandarisar whose inhabitants, although presently Muslim, speak Kalaṣh. These people are reputed to be "ba•ri", former craftsmen slaves of the Kalaṣh. Within the last century they converted en masse to Islam and escaped their traditional servitude. From this kind of evidence, it appears that in Kalash society there was also a merging of the class of craftsmen slaves, "ba•ri", the indigenous inhabitants of the area, "Ba•la•lik" (Jazhi) and incestuous outcases, "bai•ra", indicating the presence of a quite heterogenous group of outcases who more recently have become associated with Islam.

Kalaṣh culture is pre-literate and because of this it sometimes exhibits a certain fluidity of inherent changeability with regard to its beliefs and practices. It is, therefore, often difficult to determine how recent certain expressions or attitudes might be. The type of situation found traditionally in the Bashgal where manual labor was performed for the noblemen by the slaves is not manifested in contemporary Kalaṣh culture. If a Kalaṣh man wants prestige then first he must acquire wealth and this means he must work.

For example, in 1977, at the spring festival, Ẓoeshi, in Bomboret, I recorded a song (eulogy) given by the shaman from Rombour, Janduli Khan, praising the abilities of two high ranking men (both deceased within the last fifty years) as builders and carvers, "ōu•stat". They both belonged to the Dra•mɛ̣•sɛ̣ clan, one of the three wealthiest and most prestigious of all the clans in the valley.

In Bomboret Valley, a man, Sumeil Beḳ, who belongs to the

highest ranking clan in Krakal village, Rachi•kosht•dari, is presently (1977) the best known carver of grave effigies, a skill which in traditional Kafir culture, would have been exclusive to the "ba•ri". Both these examples negate the equation of an avoidance of manual labor and achieving high status. One of the functions of the traditional Bashgali "ba•ri" slaves was to beat the drum at festivals. There is presently a clan in Rombour Valley, Ba•gā•li•ā, who are renowned drummers. Although Kalaṣh men will take a turn drumming at festivals, these celebrations are not begun or sustained without the presence of Ba•gā•li•ā. This clan is in fact one of the poorest and least prestigious in the valley but apparently this is not a social structural phenomenon. Their apical ancestor, Ba•gā•li, was the full brother of Dramɛ̣s, founder of the Dra•mɛ̣•sɛ̣ clan, which, as mentioned, was one of the three highest ranking clans in the valley.

Dramɛ̣s and his wife were both physically disabled, she less so than he. According to the oral legends, one autumn when the Mehtar of Chitral requested his annual payment of the "jizya" (Kafir head-tax), Dramɛ̣s was unable to transport his own load. Because his brother Ba•gā•li refused to assist him, the task fell to his crippled wife. When the details of this story are recalled today of Dramɛ̣s's wife crawling on all fours up the mountain loaded down with a sack of grain, members of the Ba•gā•li•ā clan become somewhat sheepish and show signs of embarrassment. It appears that this incident, which happened over two hundred years ago, still reflects on their collective clan character. Presumably it was at that time that these two separate clans developed out of a rift between these two men.

If the Kalaṣh "ba•ri ("bai•ra") converted to Islam and ran away, then today they obviously have no choice but to assume the tasks that the "ba•ri" traditionally performed. If a Kalaṣh man wishes to be economically successful, the prerequisite to a

rise in social, political and religious importance, he must be prepared to engage in physical, and often back-breaking labor to achieve these ends. It seems unlikely that the Kalaṣh have ever had as hierarchically stratified a society as have the Bashgalis. Group status amongst the Kalaṣh is less rigidly ascriptive, less indisputable, and more upwardly mobile in a shorter length of time through sheer industriousness than was ever possible amongst the Bashgalis.

x) Achieving Clan Status:

The most prestigious Kalaṣh clans are those who have the most wealth but who also have a reputation for their generosity both informally, and also in the institutionalization of generosity, the merit feast. Kata Sing, the man who gave the large "bira mor", "male-goat sacrifice" merit feast in the autumn of 1977 belongs to the wealthiest clan in Rombour Valley, the Mu•ti•mi•rɣh.* Over the last two centuries or so, men from each generation of the Mu•ti•mi•rɣh are renowned for giving extravagant feasts. Sak•dār, Kata Sing's grandfather, upon the instructions of a shaman, Januk Dɣhar, gave a "bira mor" feast with "bat•yak", "one-year old goats", an even more difficult feat than using the usual mixture of goats and cows or bulls ranging in age and size ordinarily required for such a "bira mor" feast.

One aspect of "bira mor" and other merit feasts is the recognition, or re-affirmation of the status of men who have previously performed similar accomplishments. In doing this, certain privileges are bestowed upon them such as the best choices of meat or a second ladleful of clarified butter, "pre•chō•na kotch", in addition to the one which each family in the community is entitled to. For more than two decades now, the Mu•ti•mi•rɣh have been known to use the largest ladle or "kotch" in the entire valley, which gives both the 'men of rank'

*The founding ancestor of this clan, Mu•ti•mir, was the great grandson of Adabok. (See Kinship Charts, Appendix II for the full geneology of this clan.)

and each member of the community, a larger portion.

The reputation and prestige of the Mu•ti•mi•rɣh goes back seven or eight generations to the lifetime of Sakdār's own grandfather, Brum•bū•ṙak. At that time, there was a famine in Rombour when the whole wheat crop was destroyed by a blight. The Mu•ti•mi•rɣh clan fed the entire population of the valley until the next harvest on their own personal reserves of grain, an act still lauded in the formal praises given today.

xi) Marriage Rules:

Of the two to three clans that are represented in each Kalaṣh village, usually one is numerically, socially and economically dominant. Individual exceptions definitely occur, but generally these clans try to arrange marriages for their children in other villages or valleys with clans of similar reputations.* The boy's family usually makes the first overtures. The amount of the bride-price, "mal", must be settled by the girl's father and his clanbrothers in consultation with the future in-laws, at a meeting called "kẖul•ta•bār" ("kẖul•ta•bā•ri" means 'in-laws'). The price varies according to the wealth and prestige of both clans. A fair payment might include "3 x 20 ch̤u•ch̤u" or "sixty dry goods" such as iron fire tripods, cooking pots,** juniper-root woven baskets, and guns, etc. Livestock is also included which might typically amount to ten goats and three of four cows (or bulls), one of which must to the future bride's mother's brother called "Mo•ā".‡ If the new

*A typical exception would be a situation in which a woman might be in poor health and want her eldest daughter to marry in the same village so she could continue to assist her in the fields. Later perhaps a wife would be arranged for a younger brother who would take over these duties from her sister-in-law.

**A variety of cooking pots are given, including the common aluminum ones from the Chitral Bazar and the increasingly unavailable "krish•na chi•din" (worth five goats) which are black, heavy iron-cast cooking pots made by the metalsmith slaves in the pre-Islamic Bashgal Valley.

‡Because a Kalaṣh woman remains affiliated with her natal clan, her brother plays an important role for her and her children throughout their lives. A young man must be presented to the community by his mother's brother and later, he may ask his maternal uncle to help him amass a bride-price to pay for his wife.

in-laws are in the same valley, the girl visits them occasionally until her first menses.

During this time, sometimes for five years or more, the son-in-law, "ja•mo" will work for his "ish•pa•shor", ("father-in-law"), bringing firewood or helping with the autumn harvests. A good relationship between a young man and his father-in-law is usually achieved by the former's willingness to perform whatever tasks the latter sets for him. Over time this relationship may prove to be very politically and economically advantageous to the young man. After her first menses and when her husband's family has completed paying the bride-price, the girl will go to her husband's house to take up full-time residence.

In Kalash culture there is a 'loop-hole' to this system of "khō•ji•kas" or "arranged marriage", called "a•la shing', literally, "on the horn", a rather graphic term for elopement. In Kalash society, where unmarried teen-age boys are the most ritually pure age grade male adolescent virginity is valued much above female continence. From a very early age women have much freedom, and pre-marital (and post-marital) relationships tend to be extremely common. The oral traditions have a rich repertoire of love songs about lovers of long ago, as well as songs above present-day lovers.

The Kalash menstrual hut, which to outsiders appears archaic and burdensome, often has its positive side. Women take nearly a one week holiday each month from household chores, leaving all children except those nursing in the care of their husbands. Sometimes they extend their stay after their menses has ended to arrange clandestine meetings with their lovers. Almost any evening there is a small gathering of young men seated about outside the 'off limits' area or perched up in close-by trees, singing love songs to their girlfiends inside the menstrual hut.

Romantic love is a subject to which many conversations inevitably turn. Daily news in the valleys often consists of

relating who has gone to the "ba•shā•le", menstrual hut, or occasionally, somewhat more exciting, who went "a la shing" in the night. If a girl is not keen on the husband her parents arranged for her, and if she has a sweetheart who is himself not tied up with a wife, they may decide to run away together. This usually happens just before, or sometime shortly after she is sent finally to her husband's house.* Sometimes the cuckolded husband is secretly glad to be rid of her because it then becomes possible to take his own lover "a la shing". In fact, young men occasionally try to 'freeze out' their 'arranged brides' for this very reason. However, the young man may be genuinely distressed because the years of labor for his father-in-law have now been wasted, and his ego and his honor are crushed. It is in this type of situation that a good relationship established earlier with his father-in-law becomes important. The latter will often support his son-in-law by exhorting his daughter to return to him or face excommunication from her natal clan. If his wife has eloped, the next day the cuckolded young man might be seen striding up and down the valley expressing his displeasure by rallying his supporters and allies, slandering his rival with heated verbal attacks, and, should the opportunity happen to arise in a chance encounter, a retaliation of physical violence. Intra-tribal homicide is shunned in Kalash society and therefore the intent is to injure rather than kill.

If the girl's father cannot persuade her to return, and, even more importantly, if the close male relatives of her lover's clan are prepared to financially recompense the ex-husband, then she will stay with her lover, who, after a small ceremony, automatically becomes her new husband. Injured feelings usually subside within a few months and are officially terminated by

*It is virtually impossible for a woman to elope with a man of her husband's clan unless the couple are willing to become Muslim. The solidarity of the clan would be too badly shattered to contemplate such a move. However, if a woman's husband dies, she often marries his brother.

making the appropriate financial settlement with the ex-husband and his clan. This payment is called "dond" and it must be double whatever the ex-husband paid as bride-price to the girl's father. The ex-son-in-law's labor must be forfeited.

If the original price was sixty dry goods, this becomes one hundred and twenty, and ten goats become twenty, etc. Should the girl later on elope again with someone else, (and this has been known to happen as many as five times), the price will always be double the double, ie. two hundred and forty dry goods.

The metaphor used for this "dond", the "doubling of the bride-price" is a pregnant woman producing a child. The original bride-price is called "kũ•ak kũ•ak", "child-child price". This imagery also applies to the objects in the payment. For example, "bu•tēl i•dhon" are heavy, wrought iron fire tri-pods (made in Nuristan) which are grouped as 'mother objects'. If the original husband had as a part of the bride-price three such tripods he can expect to receive three of this same type from the husband but also be prepared to accept three ordinary Chitrali bazar tripods called 'child objects' in the doubling process. A woman will be prevented from making any further moves when her 'cost' becomes so high that no one could possibly affort to pay for her.

This practice of doubling the bride-price is in fact, one of the major reasons why there are presently such a large number of Kalash young people between the ages of about seventeen and thirty converting to Islam. If it appears unlikely that the boyfriend's family or clan can, or are willing to pay the "dond", "double bride-price", and if the young people are determined to be together, then they will run away to a Muslim town in the Chitral Valley. There the girl changes her costume and by saying the "Kalimah"* they become converts to Islam.

* "Ashhadu inna la ilaha ila-llah: Muhammadun rasul Allah." Literally, I bear witness that 'There is no god but God and Muhammad is the apostle of God'". (Cragg, 1969:6)

This act allows them to completely side-step the "dond". Islam adheres to no such practice and, as Muslims, the ex-husband's clan has no recourse through the usual channels of Kalash tribal law and custom. When the furore that usually accompanies these incidents dies down, perhaps after a few months, the couple returns to their valley to take up residence either separately or in the husband's house, as Kalash Shaikhs.*

It is this rapidly escalating phenomenon that, in the future, is likely to spell the end of Kalash religion and ritual. However, Kalash women who convert to the more restrictive Islam give up not only their freedom of movement but, more importantly, and probably less recognizably in the immediacy of the moment, they renounce the support systems of their natal and affinal clans. This does not perhaps affect their own lives so much, having already established the types of social relationships with men made possible by the Kalash kinship system and its associated moral structure. Their own children, however, and particularly daughters who will probably marry 'outside' to Chitrali Muslims, are cast adrift from these kinds of supportive relationships. This point can best be understood when one considers the content of quality of the relationships between Kalash men and women who belong to a strict exogamous clan structure.

xii) Women, Clan Exogamy and Affiliation:

Not only is it taboo according to Kalash custom, "law" or "das•tur" but is is also forbidden to marry into one's mother natal clan within five generations. To do so would be "n'wash", "a violation of custom", and a couple would become "mã•kã". Although not exiled as are "bai•ra", "mã•kã" are excluded from participating in certain important ceremonies and rituals which continually re-confirm their identity as

*Kalash women in increasing numbers are frequently being persuaded to become the wives of Chitrali and Pathan Muslims.

Kalash.* These marriage rules define a large number of women (and men) who, unless one is willing to become "mā•kā" or "bai•ra", are sexually 'void' for one's entire lifetime. A most necessary social, political, and economic dimension of clans are the female agnates who are collectively referred to as "ja•mī•li sher", "daughters/sisters of the clan" and remain a part of their natal clans throughout their lives. A man never makes any sexual inferences to or about his clan's "ja•mī•li" and whether or not she is deserving will always publicly defend her honor.

Despite the fact that daughters and sisters always remain associated with their natal clans, they are not entitled to inherit any family property** or any portion of the family livestock unless her father or brothers choose to bestow some upon her. This is done in a particular kind of context. Kalash men must continually fulfill an obligation called "ri•zāi" towards their clanswomen. This amounts virtually to a recognition of the efforts which women contribute to the prosperity of their natal clans, but to whose total wealth or assets they have no jural rights.

For example, "Ja•mī•li" are expected to cook the massive amounts of bread at the funeral feasts of their deceased clansmen and, gathered about the death-bed, mourn them with lengthy dirges to the point of physical and emotional exhaustion. When a merit feast is to be hosted by their natal clan, they

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* For example, the woman 'offender' is never again permitted to partake in the purification ceremony called "shish•ōuw" (literally, "head-breads") at the annual winter solstice festival, and men may never again do "is•ton•gis", the baptism or ritual purification ceremony in which a man (or boy) is annointed with the blood of a sacrificial animal.

** A man's property, usually apportioned during his lifetime, goes to his sons. The eldest often gets the larger share of property and the youngest the familial house. If he had no sons, his property goes to his brothers, or father, or if none of these men are extant, to the closest male relative in the clan.

spend months finger-weaving the intricate, cotton-thread neck garlands to be presented to the 'big men' (Illustration #6) and do the massive task of cleaning and milling the grain (not to mention growing it) and then cooking breads, often for more than a thousand guests, almost non-stop throughout the feast. (Illustration #20)

In appreciation for this kind of labor, brothers or fathers occasionally make gifts to the "ja•mī•li" of sheep, or one-year old goats, or sometimes even more generously, of a lactating cow, if one's sister has perhaps just had a new baby. (Illustration #18) Men will bring their "ja•mī•li" jewellery or cloth from the Chitral bazar, firewood from the mountain if the need arises, gifts of cheese that they have made in the high pastures, or any number of other gestures. Probably the most significant example of the institutionalization of "ri•zāi" is the merit feast "sa•ri•ɕk", in which a father honors his married daughter (and his affines). This feast will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

However, "ri•zāi" does not end with this series of mutual work obligations or economic exchanges. If a man conscientiously fulfills his "ri•zāi" towards his "ja•mī•li", then she (they) will pray to God for him. The Kalash believe that without these prayers from their women, including wives but more especially the "ja•mī•li", neither the community, clan nor individual will prosper. In order to give a merit feast a man must be economically successful. The wealth needed to carry out these feasts can only be acquired with God's blessings, which are bestowed upon a man whose women pray for him.

CHAPTER 3 - The Relationship Between the Institution of the Merit Feast and Kalash Religion.

i) Influences of Islam:

Kalash religious beliefs are too complex to be adequately explored in the context of a thesis on the merit feast, but in this chapter I will examine a few points related specifically to the feast. The over-all dialogue at the "bira mor" (sacred male-goat sacrifice) merit feast in November, 1977, represented both ends of a belief spectrum that ranged from the most orthodox of Kafir notions to the most "avant garde" of cosmolcgical interpretations. The following discussion will illustrate what I mean by this last statement.

The Kalash world view is anthropocentric in the sense that they believe if their sacred moral code is violated, the gods will administer a swift and certain justice, in the form of personal disaster or natural calamities such as earthquakes or floods. These people also subscribe to a belief in an underworld called "pa·la·loiy", "the final resting place of the ancestors"* which is connected to this "chum tarā du·ni·yā" by a metal pillar. (For further references to this metal pillar see Appendix #2.)

For over five centuries the Kalash have lived as an ever-diminishing minority surrounded by populations subscribing to the philosophically more sophisticated and proselytizing world religion of Islam. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that they have adopted some ideas from their neighbours. What is unexpected though, is that some seemingly contradictory Islamic notions have become extremely popular Kalash expressions. For example, in addition to their belief of an

*At times of crisis the Kalash call up their dead ancestors to ask their advice using divination techniques called "thum ku·chak" and "stãnk ku·chak". The former literally means "searching with a (goat-hair) bow" used by the men, and the latter means "searching with a (metal) bracelet" which is employed by the women. The idea is that if held in a certain loose fashion, when the ancestors are present, these objects will begin to swing of their own accord.

expeditious divine justice, the Kalash have incorporated the Muslim notion of a final day of judgment set for some undefined future date. They also refer to an afterlife in heaven with no attempt to make it consistent with their notion of an underworld home of the ancestor spirits. An explanation which suffices in one context may be entirely over-shadowed (a convenient temporary amnesia), in the next instance. The spirits* of the dead seem to dwell in any place which is uppermost in the referent's mind at any one moment, ie. the underworld, heaven, or sometimes even the tall mountain 'Palar' (behind Rombour Valley) believed to be the home of the "pa·ri·ān" fairy spirits. In favoring one idea, the others are conveniently bracketed off, and there is no concern to make sense of one concept in relation to other possibilities.

It would be a misrepresentation if an outsider were to attempt to define or describe Kalash religion as a coherent or consistent belief system. This is not to say, however, that an outsider cannot give a coherent and consistent description of such heterogenous and often conflicting beliefs. I am not arguing that this non-literate Kalash culture is incapable of logical thought, in many instances quite the contrary, but that their multi-layered and heterogenous religious beliefs inherently permit a certain shifting perspective. I believe, however, that there is presently some evidence which indicates a trend towards systematization, this being what I referred to earlier as the "avant garde" of religious interpretations. This idea still needs some further clarification.

Kalash religion is polytheistic with a host of "dç·va lok" (divine beings), local deities, fairies, and "bhut" (malevolent spirits), all of whom are assigned various powers and responsibilities such as the health of livestock, agricul-

*The Kalash use two words for spirit. One is a Khowar word, "jan" which may also be used as a term of endearment, "oh mai jan", "oh my dear". The other pure Kalash word is "har·wa" which refers to the spirits of the dead ancestors.

ture, fertility, etc. There appear to be very few individuals in Kalaṣh culture who are able to objectify their society's religious beliefs, (undoubtedly related to the above discussion), and there is rarely a consensus between any two individuals who may venture their own interpretations. Most interesting, however, were a few separate occasions on which certain spokesmen were prompted to give their views and which had in common a parallel, although as yet highly unusual theme.

These individuals classified the many local deities and 'divine beings' as being only messengers. This interpretation would be given in conjunction with another closely associated idea that there is also a single most important 'Creator God' called "De•zāu"*. He is usually described as the son or sometimes the husband of the birth goddess in the menstrual hut, "De•zā•lik"**. De•zāu is rarely appealed to through animal sacrifices, he has no altar and is conceived of as omnipresent and omnipotent. In prayers or oaths he is frequently referred to as "Xo•dai", the Urdu (Persian) word for God, or sometimes even "Allah" himself. These usages I have heard in public speeches, given by tribal 'elders' in front of large numbers of guests assembled for formal occasions such as the merit feasts. I believe that these expressions indicate an even more profound phenomenon than the mere accretion of undigested Muslim beliefs onto Kalaṣh religion. To determine the reasons why these expressions are popular on formal occasions, the Kalaṣh view of themselves and vis-a-vis the Muslims, must be considered.

In their oral forms, songs, poetry, orations, etc. one comes across frequent reference to the word "ni•shān". Although sometimes referring to different things in other contexts, most importantly it means the "mark of God", which may amount

*"De•zik" is the infinitive of the verb "to make" or "to create".
**"Lik" is a diminutive suffix also sometimes used to denote the feminine gender.

to no more than a rough design etched into a slab of wood.* The literacy rate amongst the Kalaṣh is still extremely low, probably about one percent,** and for the majority of the population the written word is associated with supernatural or magical powers. From this point of view, the Muslim 'holy book', the recorded word of God, is the epitome of written charms.

At the Kalaṣh merit feast in November, 1977, not only was the Creator God being summoned as "Allah", but the speechmakers also made references to the "sacred book of the Kalaṣh", "the written word of God" and one orator even compared the Kalaṣh merit feast to the Muslim pilgrimmage of Mecca. Such public events are fraught throughout with a concern by the principal organizers and spokesmen to either establish, maintain, or re-affirm their status and power. For these reasons such occasions can be used as a gauge of current attitudes and beliefs. The Kalaṣh orators who deploy these syncretic Muslim/Kalaṣh images definitely seek to impress their audiences, and the latter are all too willing to be impressed if only because the loquaciousness of the speaker has mystified them.

The Muslims, particularly the orthodox "mullahs", (religious leaders) from "down Pakistan" (Karachi, Peshawar, etc.) are openly contemptuous of the Kalaṣh Kafirs, whom they view as a pocket of pagan idolators, and a blight upon the name of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. However, in Kalaṣh culture

*For example, the same word "ni•shān" is used for the "X" marked beside a candidates name in the national elections held in Pakistan in March, 1977.
**The Muslim Chitrali Khos have only about a 2% literacy rate themselves, and their language was not written down in Urdu script until about the middle of this century by Shahzada Hussum-ul-Mulk, a son of the previous Mehtar of Chitral. (Pott, 1974:116) The same individual has also translated the Koran into Khowar. (Ibid)

it is not these overt criticisms by the iconoclastic, monotheistic Muslims that are wholly responsible for the growing emphasis upon a single Creator God, De·zāū.

In recent years an awareness of the wider world has pressed in hard upon the Kalaṣ, brought by improved modern transportation, expanding government bureaucracies, a sizable tourist industry, and mass communications. If their own 'primitive' or at least non-literate, cosmological beliefs cannot put into perspective or explain many of these new experiences, then the Kalaṣ must seek a broader mode of understanding. The evolution towards monotheism and a god who transcends the boundaries of their narrow valleys is a process potentially inherent within Kalaṣ religion itself, ie. a subsequent de-emphasis of local spirits and a greater stress upon the Creator God, De·zāū. More accurately, Islam serves as a catalyst to this process rather than the cause, and is able to provide the terminology and the symbols with which the Kalaṣ may express their increasingly monotheistic tendencies. If this is a stage in the process of an eventual complete conversion to Islam, it is a very much more subtle and complex phenomenon than the classical Muslam "Jihad", (Holy War) by which the rest of Kafiristan fell under the sway of Islam in the late 1800's. Although as yet by no means the perceptions of the majority of Kalaṣ people, these new ideas are definitely "in the air" and it is fitting that, along with the more traditional Kafir religious beliefs, they be expressed at such gala affairs as merit feasts, events whose very substance is all about power.

A more in-depth study of this process is easily a thesis in itself and must wait for a future time. It is also important to examine how the more traditional Kalaṣ Kafir religious beliefs relate to the merit feast, there being a close association between these two activities. By giving a feast, the host is attempting to achieve a higher social status and,

perhaps more indirectly, greater political power. Equally as important, however, he hopes to attain a higher sacred status by pleasing the gods in whose names he relinquishes, during the feast, his most sacred wealth, his mature male goat herd.

ii) History and Function of Sajigor:

Once again I must stress that the religious cosmology of the Kalaṣ is far too complex a subject to go into extensively in this thesis. A discussion of one god, Sajigor, must suffice since in Rombour Valley, where most of the information on the merit feasts in the following two chapters was collected, he is the presiding figure at these functions.* This god was brought from a place in present-day Nuristan called "Wɛt·dɛṣh" in the sixteenth century because of a prophecy of impending doom. The Kalaṣ attempt to establish a dynamic and intensely emotional relationship with Sajigor. However, before expanding upon this theme, it is necessary to discuss some basic facts about him such as his origins, his worldly manifestations, e.g. altars, icons, and his duties and functions.

The Norwegian linguist Georg Morgenstierne suggested two different versions of Sajigor's name, either of which (or both) should relate to his special functions. One of these pronunciations is "suchig·or". However, Morgenstierne did not expand further upon the implications of this rendition. If this form, his name may be derived from "suchi", the Kalaṣ word for fairy, or even from "such·āiy" (infinitive - "su·chɛk") which means "to perform a ritual purification" by burning juniper or holly oak branches. During the climax of these rituals, (done at Sajigor and elsewhere), the expression "such! such!" is repeated like a prayer or 'mantra' to dispel pollution and restore (the person to) a pure state. This first pronunciation could possibly then

*In Bomboret Valley, Mahandeo becomes the presiding deity on ceremonial feasting occasions. He is the god of warfare, and agricultural fertility and the harmful consequences of intra-tribal violence, e.g. incest, fratricide, are counteracted by making sacrifices to him.

indicate the sacred status which is assigned to Sajigor.

The second, and to my mind more likely possibility is that Sajigor's name was derived from the Sanskrit word, "sajji·kṛ" which means "to prepare", "to equip" or "to arm". This interpretation definitely relates more closely to the reason why Sajigor was brought from Western Kafiristan,* to be the protector or guardian of the last stronghold of Kafir religion on earth.

As further evidence of this interpretation, inside Sajigor's enclosed stone altar there are reputed to be buried sixty daggers called "ni·rung" which date back to the same sixteenth century Kalaṣh raid on the Bashgal, concluded by Sajigor's transfer to Rombour. Naŋga Dṭhar, whom the Kalaṣh regard as the greatest of all their shamans to date, was reputedly the advisor and spiritual guide to the leader of this successful campaign, King Raja Waiy of Bomboret Valley. Afterwards, in order to preserve the power which had been accrued to these deadly weapons (in hand to hand combat) in a very bloody battle, Naŋga Dṭhar ordered the Kalaṣh warriors who owned them, to place them inside the stone altar being built to house the newly arrived god. With these potent weapons inside his altar, Sajigor is himself "armed" or "equipped" to defend Kalaṣh culture to the last.

Sajigor's role as 'protector' is frequently expressed by a metaphorical image which describes him as fixing a huge iron lock onto the end of the valley adjoining Rombour (Gaŋgawat), the upper extremities of which lead up over the passes into Nuristan. When the Kalaṣh graze their goats in

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* By this denomination, I simply mean those Kafir tribes who live(d) in the foothills and side-valleys on the Western slopes of the Hindu Kush mountains (present-day Nuristan), as opposed to the Kalaṣh who live in the eastern foothills of these same mountains. It should not be confused with the term Western Katis, who live in the Ramgul Valley some few hundred miles to the west of their "brothers", the Eastern Kati, who live in the Bashgal area (See map.)

the summertime in these alpine pastures, Sajigor's lock, symbolically at least, protects these animals and their shepherds from the Nuristani rustlers who come over the passes to rob them. Sajigor's role as the protector of Kalaṣh goats is one of his most important functions.*

Palwal claims that Sajigor also protects the crops from disease inflicted by evil spirits (1977:31). Yet this writer fails to mention Sajigor's extremely critical relationship with the Kalaṣh patrilineal clans which, together, make up the "grō·wēi", "the sacred male community", to which every boy or man over the age of seven or eight belongs. Sajigor is the principal focus of most of the ritual activities associated with the fertility and prosperity of these clans.

The component parts of his open-air site, ie. altar, sacred trees** (Illustration #7), etc., which are arranged like a cosmic diagram, are located in a holly oak grove upstream in Rombour away from the centers of habitation. (See Sketch #2) Elevation is associated with higher or lower secular, as well as sacred statuses: the houses of high-ranking clans tend to be the highest in the villages and the god-sites and the goat sheds are, for religious reasons, located above the villages. The valleys are also divided into two domains, "wṭhunk" ('upstream') which being closer to the high mountains, home of the fairies, sacred markhor, and juniper forests, is considered to be purer than "prṭ·hunk" ("downstream") connected with womens' bathing

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*There are two other gods also responsible for the flocks, "Su·ri·zān" and Gosh·i·doiy". The former resides in the valleys inside the goat sheds during the winter, and the latter god is called upon at the spring festival to accompany the goats up to the high pastures for six months.

**There are two very important trees at this site. The one at the center of this entire "mandala-type' site is a very stunted and gnarled, old holly oak tree. (Illustration #7) A second tree, said to have grown up from the spot where Raja Waiy's black arrow stuck in the ground, is an unusually large deodar (evergreen) tree, the proportions of which are found no where else in the whole lower valley. Its thick trunk is naturally denuded of all branches to a height of about six metres.

places, menstrual huts, Muslim habitation, etc.*

Sajigor's altar is situated on the left hand bank at a point where the Rombour River takes a sharp bend. Two of the largest irrigation channels in the valley commence at this point, one of which waters several fields on the left bank and the other, on the opposite side of the river, is the "golden channel". As mentioned previously, this channel runs for about six kilometres, to end up in the fields of the prestigious Mu·ti·mi·rgh clan of Kalaṣhāgrom village. Because of its special location , the Sajigor site is regarded as being the most sacred place in the entire valley and may be visited only by men. Women are not permitted to approach this sacred grove within about eight hundred metres. If women find themselves at the few elevated places on the sides of the valley where one can look down to see the site nestled in the holly oak forest, they are forbidden to so much as cast their eyes in that direction. Sajigor remains as inaccessible to the women as the menstrual hut goddess "De·zā·lik" is for the men.

(iii) Origins of Sajigor:

Another name which I have heard the Kalaṣh use for Sajigor is "Di·san·ē" which they claim is the Kati (Bashgali) appellation for this same god. It is at this point that the form and the nature of Sajigor becomes extremely complex. There was a very popular goddess with a very similar name, "De·san·i" (or "Disni") who was commonly worshipped by all pre-Islamic Kafir tribes in the area now called Nuristan. In Robertson's time, the importance of this goddess "De·san·i" was indicated by her very distinctive shrine in the Bashgal village of Kamdesh (Kombrom), which was the most elaborate in the entire valley. Robertson observed that:

*If a woman has given birth, she may not go into the upper portions of the village or travel up the valley until she has done a special purification ceremony at one of the three principal annual festivals, depending on which festival comes first after she has finished her two to three month post-natal pollution period.

> "it was built by men brought from Presungal (valley) for the purpose. It is covered with carving, and has the wedge-shaped roof so common in Presungal and practically never seen in the Bashgal Valley except at this place. Along both sides of the base of the sloping roof poles are fixed and support wooden images of birds..(1896:396)

The Kalaṣh claim that Sajigor ("Di·san·ē") was brought from a place in Western Kafiristan called "Wɛt·dɛsh" which some sources mistakenly claim was in the Bashgal. (Wazir Ali Shah, 1974:77) However, there appears to be enough evidence to indicate that "Wɛt·dɛsh" was in (or was another name for), the Prasun Valley the same place which Robertson said was the original center for the goddess De·san·i.*

When I enquired from the Kalaṣh themselves as to the location of "Wɛt·dɛsh", in their usual casual manner they gestured "over there", pointing in the direction of Nuristan. Few of them ever having been more than fleetingly over the Afghanistan border, they were unable to be of any further help. However, on other occasions, while documenting some further oral histories, I did record the names of two sites (or villages, I wasn't sure at the time) "Bronz" and A·ṭɛ·ṭi" which were the exact locations in "Wɛt·dɛsh" from whence the Kalaṣh claim Sajigor ("Di·san·ē") was brought. There is a village on the Prasun River called "Pronz" which the Kalaṣh have possibly rendered "Bronz". In Kalaṣh "pon·du·rē bronz" which literally means "the round meadow", is used to denote a funeral or a dance ground. "A·ṭɛ·ṭi" is somewhat more difficult to decipher. Tentatively at least, I would suggest that it is the Kalaṣh name for "Shtiwe", a village north of "Pronz" ("Bronz") on the Prasun River. Robertson, referring to this same village by its Kati (Bashgali) name of "Kstigigrom" ("Kstigi-village") said of this place that:

*The Prasun is somewhat further west and north of both the Bashgal (Kamdesh) and the Waigal river systems (see map).

"(its) chief temple was to Imra...* and (that) undoubtly (it) was the most sacred village in the whole of Kafiristan." (1896:389)

The Kati oral histories indicate in fact, that the Prasun Valley which they call "Kti•wi" was their original home valley. (Morgenstierne, 1953:161) Morgenstierne's fieldwork also supports the idea that the "Wɣt•dɣsh", which he renders "Wɣtr"** is the Prasun Valley. (1973:164) This evidence seems to satisfactorily establish the fact that Sajigor ("Di•san•ẽ") was brought from the Prasun, which was also the home of the most important Kafir goddess, De•san•i.

Not only are their origins and the names of these two deities markedly similar, but when one examines their functions there are many other common features. Of all the Kafir goddesses De•san•i was the most powerful. (Palwal, 1977) She was responsible for fertility (human, livestock and agriculture), virility, productivity (dairy and crops, particularly wheat and millet), and protection (of goats and of Kafir warriors on raiding missions). (Palwal, 1977:161) In the Bashgal specifically, Robertson noted that De•san•i had many bridges and irrigation channels constructed in her name. (1896:410)# In the Prasun Valley she was particularly responsible for the cattle, and oversaw the production of dairy products and their sacrifice. (Edelberg, 1968:8)

The elaborate De•san•i temple in the Bashgal described by Robertson was located above the village. Since it was at a 'sacred elevation' it could only be attended by men, despite the fact that the deity was herself female. A prohibition against women approaching De•san•i corresponds to similar

*"Im•ra" in the Prasun, ("Im•ro" - Kati, "Yamr•di" - Waigal) was the highest Creator God of the Kafir pantheon (Morgenstierne, 1953:163) and corresponds to the Kalash god "De•zāu".
**"Wɣtr" is the name Robertson gives at the Kati denomination for "mountain fairey". (1896:412) In Waigali this becomes "wɣtri". (Morgenstierne, 1953:165) The Prasun or "Wɣt•dɣsh", according to this association,means "land of the fairies".
#This calls to mind the specific location of Sajigor's "open-air temple" on the Rombour River next to the start of two major irrigation channels.

restrictions against women at Sajigor in Rombour. There are other more significant resemblances.

In the Bashgal, the De•san•i shrine was the spiritual center of the Kafir winter solstice festival. (Robertson, 1896: 410) Sajigor presently serves this same function in Rombour for the Kalash winter festival. If a man in the Bashgal had a son, he would sacrifice a goat at her shrine. When this boy became of age, he was presented to the (male) community at the De•san•i shrine wearing special loose wool pants which symbolize his membership in the male community. His father would sacrifice goats at the shrine and after baptizing the boy in the blood, would feed the men who had gathered at the shrine a feast of meat. During their winter solstice festival the Kalash perform the same presentation ceremony ("is•ton•gis" - "baptism in blood"), but the goats are killed on the "sacred" roofs of the goat sheds which are located above the village before going to the god-site. Afterwards the whole male community proceeds to Sajigor altar where the boy is individually introduced to him and "Bal•u•mein", the prophet messenger who is said to visit this place for three days during the winter solstice festival. Annually, on this occasion, a long willow withe for each living member of the sacred male community is then thrown onto the top of the Sajigor altar. The boys being presented in their special loose pants have their sticks thrown onto the altar for the first time. In both the above examples, the emphasis of the two deities Sajigor ("Di•san•ẽ") and De•san•i is definitely upon their relationships to the individual members of the partilineal clans who together make up the sacred male community.

At De•san•i's own festival which used to take place in the Bashgal in mid-summer, huge quantities of cheese and butter were brought from the alpine pastures to the goddess's shrine where all the men had gathered to enjoy a feast of bread and dairy products. (Ibid:590) The annual pre-harvest

Kalaṣh festival of "U·chow" which takes place at Sajigor is an almost identical celebration. Both these festivals stress the role of De·san·i and Sajigor as divine beings who are concerned with the livestock and their productivity.

In the Waigal Valley:

> "goat horns are associated with wealth, the man who has many goats is rich, he can give feasts and achieve rank. A man who have given many feasts can have goat horn symbols carved on the front of his house. Horns, wealth, and presitge are closely associated...A successful hunter will decorate the front of his house with the horns of the animals he has killed. (Schuyler Jones, 1974:99)

Palwal, although critical of Jones' emphasis on horns with hunting, agrees with him that they are definitely important symbols of achieved rank. Palwal also stresses that horns are symbols of fertility, specifically related to the powers of De·san·i.

Amongst the pre-Islamic Kafirs of the Ashkun Valley, a house-owner who wished to carve 'U-shaped' horns on the door of his house must have more than four hundred goats and annually sacrifice twenty to De·san·i. (1977:268) There is a second horned design from the same area called "Atali-Desani" composed of repeatedly crossed horns. The actual carved head of the goddess appears in the crotch of the final, uppermost cross. To use this symbol, a man must sacrifice sixty goats annually to De·san·i and thus achieves the rank of "Mir" ("Maswi", "Masi" or "King"). (Ibid:269) Horns carved on houses are supposed to affect the fertility of women within, and ensure plenty when they are put onto the doors of storage rooms or goat sheds.

Like the Ashkun Kafirs, horns for the Kalaṣh are connected with wealth, rank, and fertility. In Kalaṣh language the work "sa·ri·fā" is most commonly used to describe a gift of new clothes which are presented to honor men of rank on ceremonial occasions. For the most difficult of Kalaṣh merit feasts, a man must also prove that he has at least four hundred

goats before the festivities may commence. During these feasts a large number of goats (perhaps about thirty), are sacrificed in the name of Sajigor. The expression "Sajigor' as sa·ri·fā", meaning "gifts of clothing for Sajigor", is metaphorically used to describe the numerous pairs of horns belonging to these sacrificed animals. After the feast, they are affixed to the trunks of the sacred trees which grow next to the god's altar, including one evergreen with the tall bare trunk (See Chapter 3, Footnote #2) (Illustration #7). The quantity of these special objects symbolizes the obeisance of the feast-giver to Sajigor, whom he hopes will reciprocate by bestowing blessings on himself and his clan.

It seems evident from the above discussion that there are many similarities between the Kafir goddess De·san·i and Sajigor ("Di·san·ē"). The most obvious discrepancy is in the gender of these two deities. However, the contradiction of gender indicates that the transfer of Sajigor from Western Kafiristan was a much more complex affair than the quasi-historical Kalaṣh oral accounts presently reveal. The clue to this potentially puzzling situation is the connection which the Kalaṣh sometimes make between Sajigor and the Clan/Household goddess, Jeshṭak, whom they claim is his mother.

Already mentioned is the fact that the goddess De·san·i was frequently symbolized by carved goat horns. Since the 1896 conversion to Islam, there have been uncovered in the Prasun Valley a few very interesting three-dimensional carvings, also of this same goddess. These, (and I believe that there are extant only three such figures), are of a woman seated on the back of a goat. She sits in a special chair (symbol of rank) and her vulva is hidden by the head of the goat. This animal has exceptionally long, upright horns which the goddess, with her arms outstretched holds in her hands about half-way up their length. (Edelberg, 1968:8)

While in the Prasun in 1964, Edelberg discovered that in pre-Muslim times a statue of this type existed in the

Illustration 9 : Before a man can ritually sacrifice a goat, he must purify himself by first washing his arms and legs. Then a second man splashes him with water that must pass through the smoke of a burning juniper branch before it strikes him. After this ritual, the individual is called "on·jeṣ·ṭa moch" and may touch only the goat, the knife, and the sacrificial blood. Both these men, father and son, belong to the hereditary priestly lineage of the Ba·lɛ̃·rɛh clan in Rombour Valley.

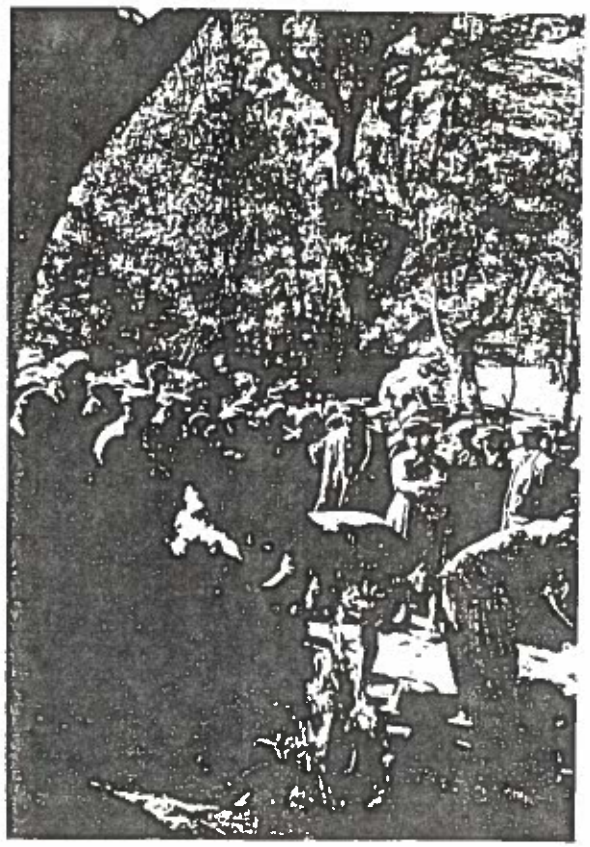


Illustration 10 : The sacrificial scene at the Sajigor altar during Kata Siŋg's "bira mor" feast. A sacred male goat is being killed by an "on·jeṣ·ṭa moch", "purified man" (see Illustration 9), who after pours cupped handfuls of the blood onto the juniper fire and then the god's altar (off the picture to the left). The men behind are calling prayers to ask Sajigor to accept the offerings of the goats. Photograph by Saifullah Jan, Bā·ga·li·ā clan, Rombour.

Illustration 11 : The Rombour shaman "dɣ·har", Janduli Khan of the Dɣ·rum lineage, Mu·ti·mi·rɣh clan. While working in Karachi in the late 1960's, this individual dreamt he was seduced by fairies. He returned immediately to Northern Pakistan and became a shaman. He is famous for his ability to have prophetic dreams foretelling such things as natural calamities.

Illustration 12 : Orators at a "sa·ri·ɛk" ("feast for the clan daughters"), re-telling the accomplishments of the ancestors of the host's clan. On the right is Baraman, son of the now deceased Lampson who is still described as being "as sweet as the milk of a spirit lamb". These men belong to the hereditary priestly lineage of the Ba·lɛ·rɣh clan. Baraman is presently the holder of the "ɣatch", "secret songs", given to him by his father and which he will pass on to one of his own seven sons. The man on the left (foreground) is Kush Nawaz, Ba·lɛrɣh clan, and presently the most talented orator in all three Kalash valleys.

Illustration 13 : "Shā·ra kund·ā·li", the "markhor hide (hair) moccasins",symbols of rank which may be worn only after a man has performed certain feasts. If an individual, his father or grandfather has done "bira mor", then this man (or boy) may wear these moccasins at festivals and he must also be buried in them when he dies. Other feasts which then qualify the host to wear these shoes are "sha·rū·gah"(Chapter 4, section vi), "gõnt wass", and "pi·ma·sa",(Chapter 4, section vii, a) and b)).

Illustration 14 : Feeding the guests at "sa·ri·ɛk" feast for the 'clan daughters' hosted by the Dra·mɛ·sɨ clan in October, 1977. (See Chapter 4, section v.) After a man (or his father or grandfather)have achieved a certain rank by performing feasts, they are permitted to sit outside the house on a "han·yak", the low Kalash"stools".Witnessing the host's 'goat wealth' at a "bira mor", those men who have previously done this feast sit on "han·yaks" on the 'pure' roofs of the goat sheds, this being one of the highest distinctions that a man may achieve.(See Chapter 5, section iii a).)

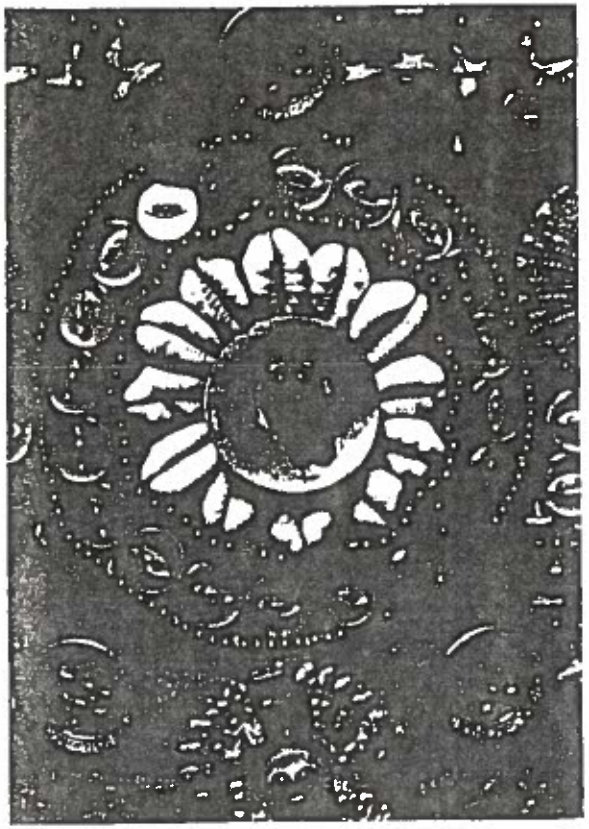


Illustration 15 : Cowrie-shell whorl called "kɣ̆·ŕa"(shield") sewn on the back of a Kalash woman's headdress. Traditionally in the Bashgal, this shield symbol was reserved for men of the "ley-mach","man-killer" rank. An old Kalash story recounts the bravery of a "ja·mi·li"("daughter") of the prestigious Ba·ra·mōuk clan in Bomboret. A "ti·ri·wɛ·ri", "bad spirit", was eating the babies in the menstral hut and the woman plotted and killed it. Achieving the rank of 'man-killer', she was the first woman permitted to wear the shield symbol on her headdress,"ko·pās".

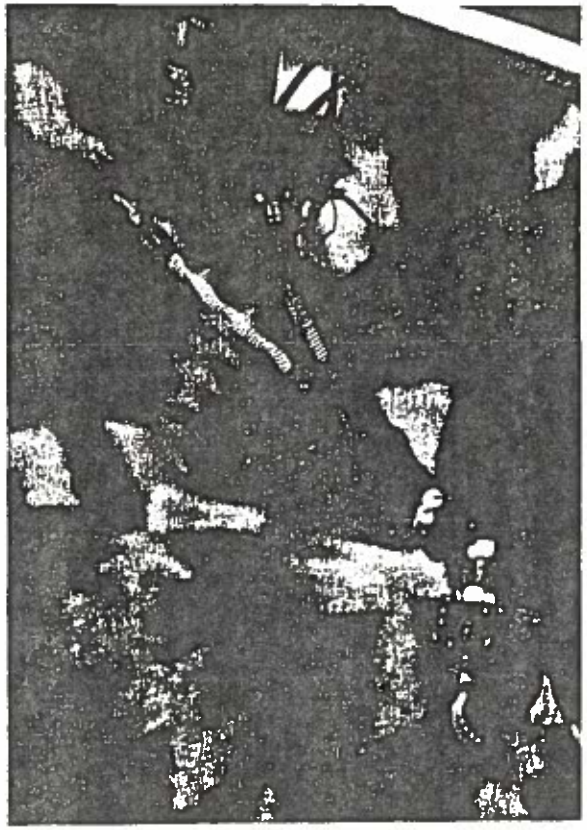


Illustration 16 : "Cheish" ("plume") made from braided wheat stalks and tipped with the iridescent feathers of a Himalayan pheasant. Women sometimes make "cheish" for their lovers (like the one in the photograph) which the man will affix to his hat brim. When a man is giving a feast celebrating killing a leopard, the "cheish" has three feathers (stalks) or if the victim was a man, then the plume, called "a·sɛ·mal" has nine feathers.

Illustration 17 : A Kalash woman convert to Islam, "Shaikh", the widow of the deceased Dra·mᵹ·sᵹ clansman, Gulap Din.(See Chapter 4, section iv.) Despite being forced to become Muslim in the mid-1950's for killing a man, Gulap Din was the last Kalash to give a 'man-killer' merit feast, celebrating the occasion. The wives and children of the three men involved in this incident were also forced to convert. Twenty years later, this woman, excluded from Kalash festivities, still bemoans her lose of 'Kafir' status.

The one we met?

Illustration 18 : A "ja·mi·li", "daughter/sister" of the Mu·ti·mi·rɣh clan at Kata Sing's "bira mor" feast, kissing her "waiy","share" of her natal clan's livestock as it is being presented to her. In appreciation of the woman's work at her brother's feast, custom prescribes that she be given at least one, year old goat. This act is part of the Kalash concept of "ri·zāi","duty" of a brother towards the women of his clan. If he is generous towards his 'sisters', they will pray for his future health and prosperity.

Illustration 19 : Distributing 'clarified butter' at the Dra·mg·sg clan's "sa·ri·gk", feast for the "clan daughters", in Rombour, October 1977. Only a man who has himself performed this feast is permitted the honor of distributing the portions, giving an extra ladleful to each man who has performed the big feasts, e.g. "sa·ri·gk", "bira mor", or "sha·rū·gah". The 'ghee' is kept hot in a "krish·na chi·din", an "iron cooking pot"(worth five female goats), made by a Bashgali craftsman in pre-conversion Nuristan.

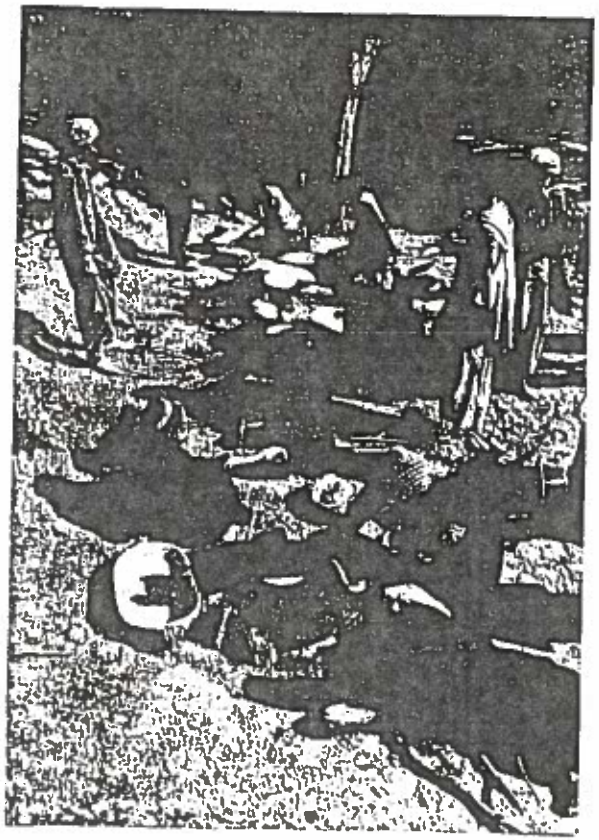


Illustration 20 : "Ja·mi·li", "sisters/daughters" of the Mu·ti·mi·rh clan performing their "ri·zāl", "duty" to their natal clan by cooking the large, 'double-handful' breads called "dro·cht·nik".(symbols of wealth and generosity) at Kata Sing's "bira mor" in Rombour, November 1977. (See Illustration 18.)

Illustration 21 : The "mi•ein moch","'divider-men' of food" apportioning all the correct shares to each individual in the Rombour community, plus Muslims and Kalash guests from other valleys. These 'divider-men' must know all the persons in the valleys, as well as their ranks and statuses. They will give those who have achieved formal rank extra portions of meat and butter.

Illustration 22 : Two basketfuls of food, distributed at the Dra•mɛ•sɨ clan's "sa•ri•ɛk" feast and destined for one Rombour household. Each family sends two baskets, one for the women and one for the men, plus a third basket if any men are off up the valley caring for the goats. Each valley resident (Kalash) or guest receives three of the 'double breads' at each meal served at the feast, plus a portion of whatever garnishing accompanies them, in this case: salt gravey, meat, and clarified butter.

Illustration 23 : Costume worn by by a Kalash 'man of rank'. Attached to the soft, wool Chitrali cap is a Himalayan pheasant feather plume, symbol of a leopard or 'man-killer'. Around his neck are "shu•mān", "bands" (symbols of respect and prestige) woven by the 'clan daughters', who also make the garlands of walnut and apricot seeds, gifts which they give to honor prestigious men and guests. He is wearing the loose, white sheep's wool pants, "bōot", which stand for his membership in the "grō•wei", "sacred male community of the Kalash. On his feet are the markhor hide moccasins, ; that only men who have performed certain big merit feasts are permitted to wear. The barrel-shaped drum, called "dā•hū" is beaten with a stick held in the right hand of the "na•moosi", ranked man. The symbols woven onto the puttees wrapped around his calves represent horns of the sacred male goats.

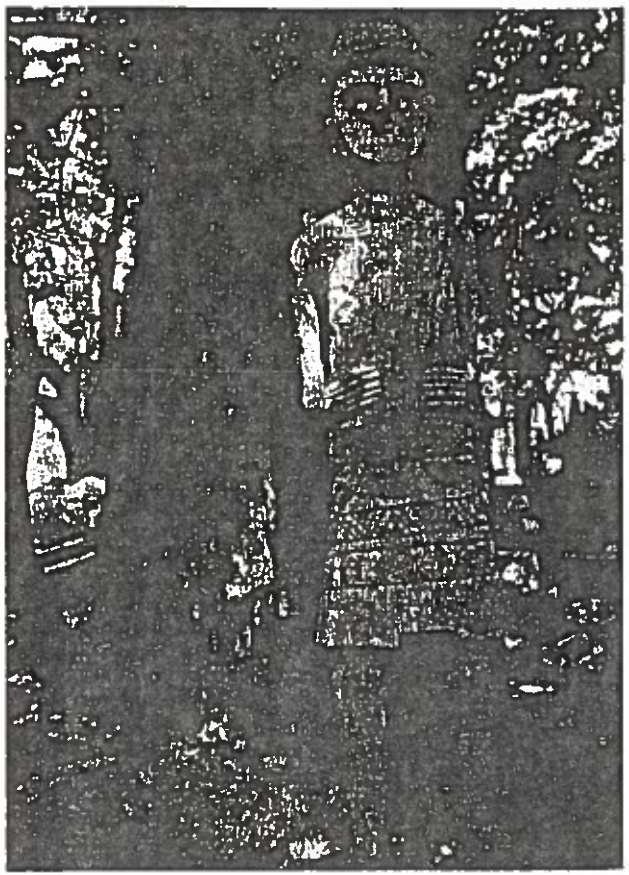


Illustration 24 : A commemorative grave effigy called "gan•dōūw", depicted wearing all the Kalash symbols of rank. This figure is carved one year after the death of a high ranking man who has either done the "sha•rū•gah" merit feast, or had it performed for him as a funeral by his clansmen. (sons and brothers). This particular figure is in the graveyard in Krakal village, Bomboret valley.

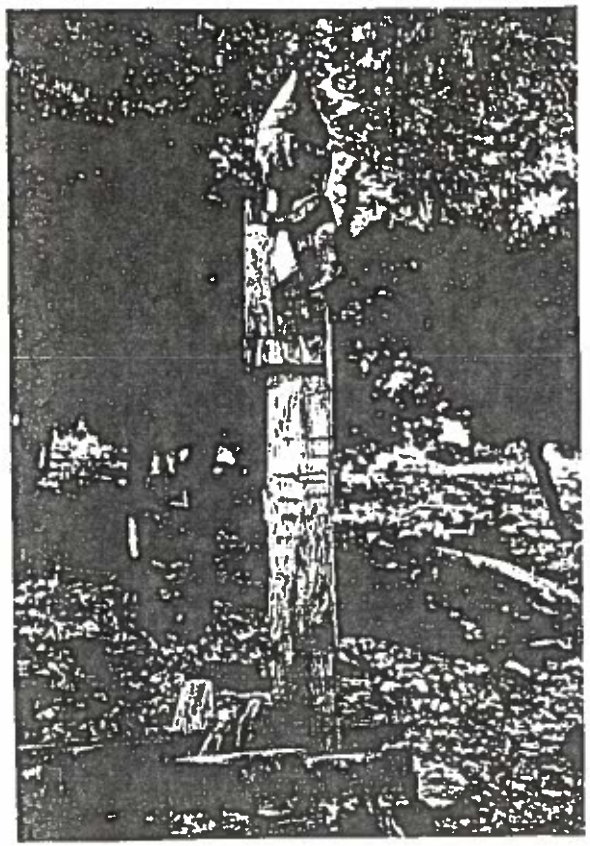


Illustration 25 : Commemorative ancestor figure called "kun•du•rēik", carved one year after the death of a man who has performed the merit feast "sha•rū•gah". The figure is seated upon a low stool, "han•yak", symbol of rank. It is placed either at the entrance way to the village of the deceased man or in one of his fields. After installation, the sacrificial blood of a sacred male goat is splashed onto its face. This statue, at the entrance to Brun village, Bomboret, is for a Bad•zei•kaiy man who died during the 1940's.

Illustration 26 : Buda, a patriarch of the Ru•ti•ni•rgh clan and father of the host of the 1977 Bombour "bir[illegible]", Kata Sing. Because this latter individual dedicated his feast to Buda, he is now eligible for the special [illegible] feast, "sha•rū•gah". Mounted on horseback, a privilege reserved for those who have hosted "bir mar", he is wearing symbols of rank including a 'silk' rob[illegible], neck band and garlands, and a (pheasant) feathered hat [illegible].

horse back rank for bir a mar

Illustration 27 : An exhausted but successful aspirant for the rank of "bir mor", Kata Sing, giving a speech on the final morning of the three day festivities. A "ja·mi·li" ("daughter/sister") of the Mu·ti·mi·rgh clan is about to honor him with another apricot seed garland.

Illustration 28 : A candid shot of Kata Sing (seated on the left), host of the "bira mor" merit feast, with a character so tough and resilient he often appears to exaggerated self parody.

Illustration 29 : Carved wooden "mā·lɛ·ri" post erected at Sajigor altar, and symbolizing a "bira mor" merit feast. Each time a man hosts "bira mor" in Rombour valley, he must refurbish the Sajigor site with two new, wooden benches and four "mā·lɛ·ri" posts. These are carved in abstract, anthropomorphic shapes with a 'feathered plume' top-knot ("cheish" - see Illustration 16), a Gordian knot design incised on the 'head' and on this example, a cross-design on the 'torso'. The holly oak grove in which the Sajigor altar is located is pictured in the background.

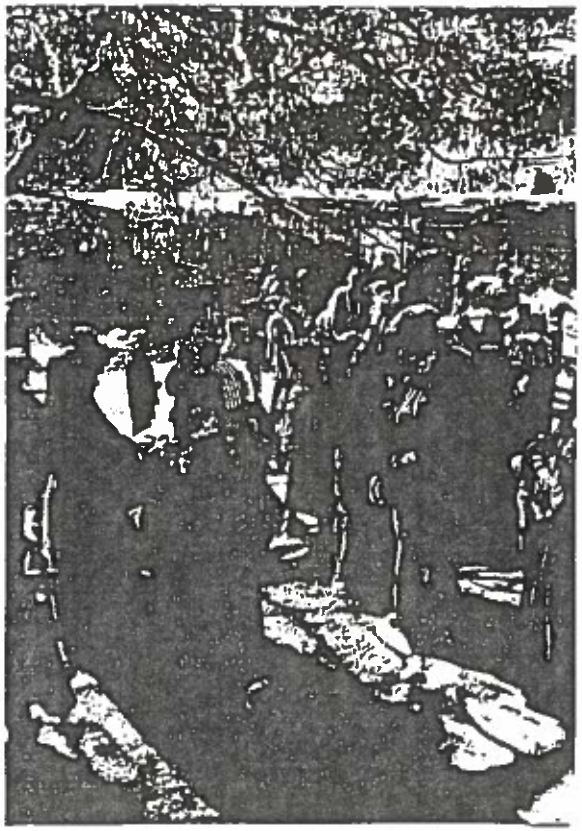
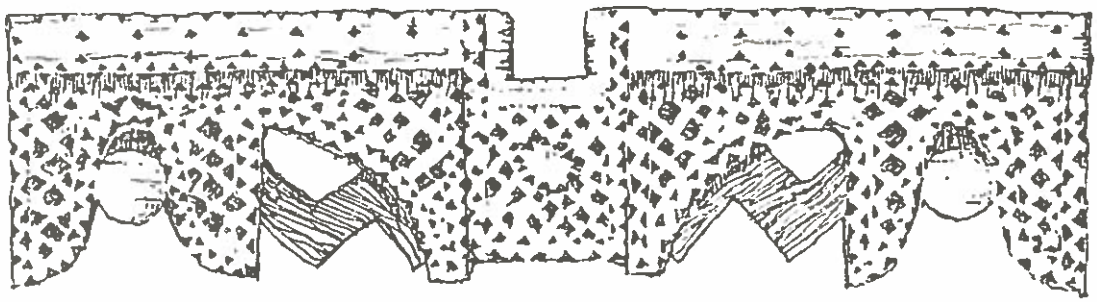
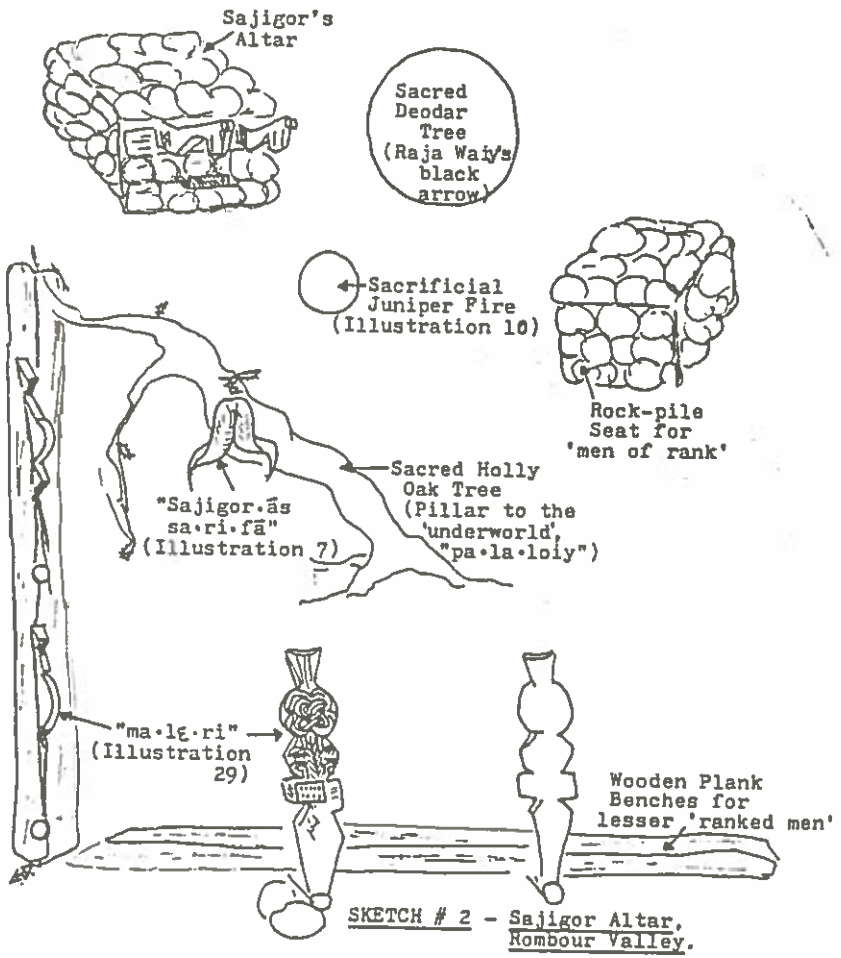


Illustration 30 : On the first day of the actual festivities of Kata Sing's "bira mor" when the Mu·ti·mi·rch "ja·mī·li"("clan daughters/sisters") returned to their natal village and garlanded their clan brothers with apricot seed necklaces and finger-woven bands.

Illustration 71 : The scene on the roof of one of the Mu·ti·mi·rɛh clansman's house on the first morning of the festive preceedings of Kata Sing's "bira mor". All the men of rank from the other two valleys, Birir and Bomboret, gathered on this roof top to be formally greeted by the host and given gifts appropriate to their rank.



Sketch #1 - The Kalash attribute many of their beliefs and institutions including wine making, shamanism, and certain religious decorative motifs, to an ancient cultural center which they call Yarkhan. This drawing illustrates a design called "ri·ki·ni chot" which, according to Kalash oral histories, was engraved into a slender metal pillar that emerged out of the earth at a place in Yarkhan. This metal pillar is said to have led down into the underworld. The legend says that a famous Kalash shaman, Nanga Dɛhar, copied the motifs by carving them into a piece of wood, which he then brought to "Wɛt·dɛsh"(Prasun Valley) in former Kafiristan. There he ordered temples dedicated to the Clan/Household Goddes built and beautified with these designs. When the Kalash migrated to the Chitral District a millenium ago, they built clan temples and decorated them with these "ri·ki·ni chot" designs. The form in the drawing on which these "ri·ki·ni chot" are shown is a "dā·dush", "capital", one of which caps each of the four central wooden pillars that support a Central Asian lantern-type roof in the Kalash clan temples, Jeshtakhan (see Appendix 2: History and Language).


Sajigor's Altar
Sacred Deodar Tree (Raja Waiy's black arrow)
Sacrificial Juniper Fire (Illustration 10)
Rock-pile Seat for 'men of rank'
Sacred Holly Oak Tree (Pillar to the 'underworld', "pa·la·loiy")
"Sajigor·ās sa·ri·fā" (Illustration 7)
"ma·lɛ·ri" (Illustration 29)
Wooden Plank Benches for lesser 'ranked men'

SKETCH # 2 - Sajigor Altar, Rombour Valley.

Orthographic Guide to Kalash Language

I have broken Kalash words into syllables, a technique which proved to be of value while learning this non-literate language in the field and later, for remembering where the stress falls in the words. Dots which are placed 'mid-line' are used to indicate these syllabic breaks, for example "ja·mī·li" (clan daughters/sisters). This word also illustrates the notations to show length of vowels - an "ī" is a long vowel and "i̊" is a short one. The syllable in which a long vowel is indicated is most often the one given the stress in the word. Vowels are frequently nasalized and this is indicated by a wavey line above the letter, for example "ʊ̃" in the word "grʊ̃·wei" (sacred male community).

Summary of Kalash Vowels:	English Equivalent
i (or ī)	as the ee in beet
i	as the i in bit
a (or ā)	as the a in father
a	as the a in what
u (or oo)	as the oo in boot
u	as the u in put
o	as the o in bow
e	as the ee in keep
e (or ē)	as the e in ravel
ɛ	as the e in get
ɤ	between the a in hat and the e in get.

There are also many in-between vowel sounds, e.g. ei, ai, ou, which are pronounced as a single sound rather than a diphthong as are the following. In the text, diphthongs are indicated by a ‿ drawn below the vowels, for example je‿o (line). English equivalents are provided wherever possible.

ie	as in the word
ieu	as in the word lieu
eo	as in the Christian name Leo
ɤi	
ʊi	
oi	as in the word coin
ai	as in the word out

Consonants in Kalaṣh: (Kalaṣh is a branch of Old Indian - and since many of the consonants are similar to modern Hindi, they could be accurately rendered in devangri script.)

k, kh, g, gh, c, ch, j, jh, d, dh, n, ŋ (as the "ng" in the English word sing), t, th, p, ph (fh), b, bh, s, sh, m, l, h, w, y.

Retroflex:

ṭ, ṭh, ḍ, ḍh, ṇ, ch (as the "ch"in church), ṣh (as the "sh" in the English word shade)

ř - the retroflex ř is commonly found after many nasalized vowels e.g. "mə̃ř" (hive). In some instances this retrolex ř is barely voiced as in the word "phā̃(ř)·gun·dēik" (man-killer stick).

r - because in Kalash language it is always a rolled r, I have left it unmarked.

ž - is like the "s" in pleasure or the "z" in azure.

x̣ - is a gutteral aspirated sound also rendered as kh, for example, Khan.

For a fuller guide to the phonology and grammar of Kalaṣh language see Georg Morgenstierne's "Notes on Kalaṣha", in Indo-Iranian Frontier Languages. (1973)

GLOSSARY OF KALASH WORDS & IDIOMS

Literal meanings wherever included are indicated by single quotation marks. See orthography for guide to pronunciation.

ai·ya mal: 'mother (double) bride-price' - the expensive (heavy) objects part of an original bride-price and recompensed in an elopement settlement to the previous husband (see 'doṇḍ').

ā̃ī·yn: millet.

A·lāiy ŏ kiạ ai·ya·li ža.wā dai ă?: What are you doing over there? ( )ucking your mothers?

a la ṣhiŋg: to elope.

ar·mān: longing or unfulfilled sorrow.

a·sɛ·mal: Himalayan feathered plume with nine stalks, symbol of 'man-killer' rank.

atrozān: Kati nobility class in pre-conversion Bashgal.

Bad·žei·kaiy: prestigious clan in Brun village, Bomboret Valley.

Ba·gā·li·ā: low ranking clan with small number of households in Balanguru village, Rombour Valley.

Ba·giṣht: protector god, responsible for irrigation and animal sacrifice in pre-conversion Kafiristan. Son of fertility Goddess De·san·i (equivalent of Sajigor).

bai·ra: violators of the Kalaṣh incest rules which forbid marriage within seven generation in the patriline (outcaste 'slaves').

Ba·la·lik: indigenous inhabitants occupying the present Chitral District when Kalaṣh migrated into the area about tenth century A.D.

Ba·lə̃·řə̃h: one of three high ranking clans in Rombour Valley.

ba·loush dɛ·wā·lat: 'old (smelly) wealth'.

ba·loush ma·chɛr·ik mə̃ř: 'old honey bee-hive', metaphor for the prosperity of long-established clans.

Ba•lu•mein: Kalaṣh prophet messenger god who annually comes on horseback from Nuristan to Bomboret and Rombour Valleys during the winter solstice festival to receive the people's prayers.

ba•ri: artisan craftsman 'caste' of pre-conversion Nuristan.

ba•shā•lē: Kalaṣh women's menstrual hut.

bash•i•kɛ̣n: women's funeral dirge.

bat: stones used to count objects, e.g. one stone represents twenty goats.

bat•yak: less than one year old goat.

ba•ya•ka•tā: 'permanent type' land sale.

ba•zu•rē rouw ā•ti,gā•aiy dra•nē: to slip in unnoticed through someone's sleeve (the king's) and come out at his neck with him in full, unsuspecting support.

bɛ̣•gār: traditional forced labor of Kalaṣh men to King of Chitral.

bɛ̣•gar•us: a witness.

bhut: a malevolent spirit (bad fairy).

bhut goor: a small black stone shaped like a foot and regarded as the magical foot of a bad spirit.

bira mor: 'sacred male goat sacrifice' merit feast, prerequitite to performing 'sha•rū•gah'.

Brun: largest village in Bomboret Valley consisting of 35 extended households, 'Ku•shūn'.

Bu•dā•lɛ̣k: fall festival of the 'virile'shepherds in Birir Valley.

Bu•lɛ̣•siŋ•ga: small clan in Brun village descended from the last Kalaṣh king of Chitral, Bu•lɛ̣•siŋ•ga.

bu•teil i•dhon: heavy iron tri-pods with twisted legs made by Bashgali craftsmen, considered to be 'ai•ya mal'.

cha•go•rum: Chitrali measure of land equalling 27 metres by 27 metres square.

chak•aiy: Kalaṣh name for 'cha•go•rum'.

chā•kur•una uk kadda: working one's way into favour with an unsuspecting person in a round aboutfashion like 'water being blown through the coiled intestines (of a slaughtered animal)'.

cha•ra•da moch: a man whose grain harvests last season to season.

Cha•tro•ma mu•nɛ̣: a goat horn flute common to the Cha•tro•ma, the Kalaṣh name for Bashgalis.

Chau Māus: Kalaṣh winter solstice festival.

chē•bin: 'Kilār' cheese skewered onto the end of a long sharpened stick.

cheiṣh: a hat plume made from woven wheat stalks which are tipped with Himalayan pheasant feathers.

chim•br tūr: mythical metal pillar to the underworld.

Chi•mik Sōn: alpine pastures used by some Rombour herdsmen.

chit: decision.

chit•ti•la kromb: well-thought out work, e.g. a successful merit feast.

chū•e•ak: a (women's) hair braid.

chu•chu: 'dry goods' such as baskets or pots (used as part of a bride price).

chum tara du•ni•yā: 'earth-top world' (see 'pa•la•loiy')

da•da: 'father' - gārda da•da - father's older brother; chu•ti•yūk da•da - father's younger brother.

dā•hū: barrel-shaped drum.

da•i•ruk: clan brother.

da•ren: a flood.

das•tar: twisted cloth head turban.

das•tur: Kalaṣh tribal custom or law.

dɛ̣•har: shaman.

dēn: closure by valley magistrates on produce until ripe.

De·san·i: goddess of fertility in pre-conversion Nuristan, Mother of Ba·gişht.

dɛ̄va lok: divine beings.

De·za·lik: Kalaṣh goddess of parturition.

De·zāū: omnipotent, imnipresent creator god.

dē̆·zik: 'to create'.

dē̆·taiy be·aiy moch, shɛ·ta·si mu·ža·rō ŏ: the man born from amongst those energetic seeds.

dɔnḍ: the doubling of the bride-proce 'mal' when a woman has eloped, paid to previous husband of new husband.

Dra·mɛ·sɛ: high-ranking clan of Rombour Valley.

dra·źɛiy lik: 'to drag' out one's work, epic style of singing.

dri·gā žaiy, uk, nā·si n'dra·nēū: (a story) like 'the water flowing in a long irrigation channel, never comes to an end'.

du·ṣhi·ṣhi is·to·rē: (uzuwa-mut in Kati language) a two-headed horse including an equestrian rider, symbol of rank; commemorative graveyard effigy.

ga·dɛiy·ra·khan: 'respected elders'.

gah: cow in Kati; irrigation channel in Kalaṣh.

gan·douw: carved standing anthropomorphic figure; commemorative graveyard effigy (for men of 'sha·rū·gah' rank').

gāŋ·gā·e: brass bell.

gatch: secret song (dangerous to 'uninitiated').

gir·a·wē: impermanent land transaction (land as collected on loan).

Gish: Kafir (Bashgali) god of war.

gōnt wass: Kalaṣh merit feast emphasizing industry in dairy process.

go·ra pa·chē̆·ŭik bouw: 'the army of white butterflies' - the Chitralis.

go·ri lōush Kho·sha·ne: the happiness of the in-laws.

Gosh·i·doiy: protector god of the goats in the alpine pastures (see 'Sur·i·zan').

griŋ·ga: heavy silver fluted neck ring, symbol of rank.

grō·wei: Kalaṣh sacred male community.

ha·li·vai: a person outwardly as sweet as candy.

han·yak: low stool, symbol of rank if used outside house.

har·wa: spirit or soul of the dead ancestor.

ha·zar Ka·shi·ri chēar pi·ouw: drinker of milk produced by a thousand snow white goats (man with the rank of 'bira mor').

iŋ·grok: fireplace

iṣh·pa·ṣhor: father-in-law (borther-in-law).

iṣh·pɛ·ri: feast of bread and cheese.

iṣh·poŋ·yuk: porridge-type food made from cooked hot milk and flour.

ish·ti·kɛk: Kalaṣh formal eulogy.

is·toŋ·gis: purification baptism of men and boys with the sacrificial blood of an animal (lamb, goat).

ja·mī·li: clan daughters/sisters

ja·mo: son-in-law.

jan: Chitrali word of 'soul'.

jāū·ro: walnut bread.

Jazhi (Jashi): indigenous peoples of the Bashgal Valley prior to the Kati/Kom migrations (see Ba·la·lik).

Jeṣh·ṭak: Household/Clan Goddess.

ji·rēip: Persian land measure (same as 'cha·go·rum').

jizya (ū·shur, zā·kut): 'Kafir' infidel head tax.

junō sha•rū•gah: funeral merit feast held while the 'host' is still living (see nash•ta sha•rū•gah).

Kalaṣha: the name Kalaṣh call their language.

ka•lɛn•ga•tɛŋg: (Kati) dance done by swaying body but restricting arm movement.

Ka•li•mah: oath spoken when converting to Islam.

ka•rus: type of millet.

Kash•gar: name Kalaṣh used historically for their 'Kingdom', Ashret to Reshun in the Chitral Valley (also ancient town in Sinkiang, China).

kho•ji•kas: arranged marriage.

khul•ta•bar•i: in-laws.

ki•lār: type of cheese made with powdered colostrum.

ko•pas: Kalaṣh women's cowrie-studded headdress.

krish•na chi•din: heavy black iron cooking pot made by Bashgali 'ba•ri'.

kŭ•ak kŭ•ak: the less expensive 'child' objects of a 'doṇḍ' paid to cuckolded husband after an elopement.

ku•ṇa•da: strong tasting bacterial cheese made in clay pots.

ku•lish pēik ṭɛṭ: glowing fire embers

kŭm: patrilineally organized clan with single male spical ancestor.

kun•du•rēik: carved commemorative effigy of 'man of rank' depicted seated on a 'han•yak'.

ku•shun: patrilocally extended household.

Ku•ṣu•waiy: clan in Brun village, previously major lineage of the Bad•že•kaiy clan.

ley mach: 'man-killer' (Kom/Kati).

lik: Kalaṣh iminutive suffix.

ma•chɛr•ik mĕ̆r am•bru•chi sa•nō: 'bee-hive covered with grapes' - metaphor for patrileal clan with an abundance of women, wives, sisters, daughters.

ma•chɛr•ik jɛ̆•o: 'line of bees' metaphor for numerically large clan.

ma•chɛr•ik mĕ̆r u•gu•žis: 'swarming bee-hive' - metaphor for numerically expanding clan.

ma•gĭ•ē•ouw: walnut breads cooked by 'jamīli' for their natal clans.

Ma•handeo: Kalaṣh god of warfare and agriculture)Rombour and Bomboret Valleys only).

(oh) mai bɛ•ru Khĕ̆ im dai: 'oh my husband (now that you are dead) what is to become of me?'

mai n' a•sa•luk hiu: 'I don't want to remain (here on this earth) any longer'.

mai ghŭ•ri ja•gai, ko pa•laiy parra?: Why do you flee from me when you see my goat hair coat?

Ma•jam: a pass between Kalaṣh valleys and the Bashgal Valley.

mā•kā: someone who has violated Kalaṣh incest rules by marrying into their mother's clan within five generations.

mal: bride-price.

ma•lɛ•ri: carved anthropomorphic post installed at Sajigor for 'bira mor'.

māun: local weight approximately forty-two kilos.

me•yāt: 'promise' to give a merit feast.

mi•rak pa•chouw: banner of silk robes the circumference of a field or village, symbolizes rank.

mo•ā: mother's brother.

mush•tya•ruk•gum•tā: communal grazing areas (certain holly oak forests).

Mu•ti•mi•rɛh: high ranking clan in Rombour Valley.

na•moo•na kromb: strange deranged) work.

na•moo•si moch: man of rank.

nāsh•ta sha•rū•gah: merit feast funeral done for a man who has performed 'bira mor' in his lifetime.

nas•wār: chewing tabacco.

ni•ruŋg: dagger traditionally used for hand to hand combat.

ni•shan: 'mark' (written carved symbol) of god.

nŏk pɛ•ṭi dur: new field made from previous 'jungle' (or forest) land.

nom tă touw how•ow: (a good man's)'name that remains behind' (after his death).

n'wɛsh: against custom ('das•tur').

on•jeṣh•ṭa bira mor: sacred male goat sacrifice merit feast.

on•jeṣh•ṭa drā•mi: certain roofs considered to be pure space and out of bounds to women.

on•jeṣh•ṭa mi•lit: sacred (magic) wealth.

on•jeṣh•ṭa mach: ritually purified man.

on•jeṣh•ṭa wah: sacred space in Kalaṣh houses dedicated to Household/Clan goddess Jeshṭak.

ō•sha•la: cream.

ōu•stat: wood carver.

pa•gōi•yuk shoo: the axle of the door of the family home - metaphor for the prosperity of the extended household.

pa•la•loiy: underworld home of the ancestor spirits.

pa•raŋ•ga•sasl : feast for the (valley) community.

pa•ri•ān: mountain fairies, herdswomen of markhor.

patch mal: feather wealth. (see 'Cheiṣh')

par•wa•zā (zeiu): prayers said at the graveside to accompany the deceased to the underworld.

pɛ•ra•zēiy: 'to transform oneself' (into a wooden statue).

pɛ•ri•shān: Urdu word in Kalaṣh meaning both joy and sorrow.

phann: grain storage bin (basement).

phā̃ (r̆)•gun•dēlk: carved willow stick placed a 'Ṣhiŋg Mou' symbolizing achievement of 'man-killer' rank.

pie pa•shai•ĭk: to show one's female goat wealth before giving a merit feast.

pi•mā•sā: funeral feast of a man who is without close male heirs, given before his actual death.

pin zɛ̆ a•ouw:a meal of bread and cheese given to the village (or valley) community on the occasion of a birth.

pra•cheiṣh: annual autumn feast performed by the wealthiest clans in the valleys.

pre•chō•na kotch: extra ladleful of clarified butter given to all men of rank at feasts.

prɛ̃•hunk: downstream.

pti•stɛm: cowrie-studded fillet for Kati/Kom man of rank in pre-conversion Bashgal.

Pũr̆: annual harvest festival in Birir Valley.

pũr̆ē: paper-thin type of 'birch' bark used to line willow bark cheese moulds.

Ra•chi•Kosht dari: high ranking clan of Krakal village in Bomboret Valley.

ra•juk hon•chɛk: 'rope pull', tug of war between two teams of men.

ra•pōush: Chitrali word for 'purdah' (seclusion of women).

ri•ki•ni (chot): intricate geometric designs carved on wooden pillars, altars and mantlepieces (brought originally from Yarkhan).

roiy: annually appointed valley magistrates (police) who guard fruit and vegetables (see 'dēn').

Sajigor: god (Kalash equivalent to Bagisht) protects Kafir religion, livestock, hydraulic system - central to merit feasts.

sa•liss: witness.

sa•ri a•mɛ̌ř•yuk jĭř: a person as sweet as the milk (magically) produced from a new-born spirit lamb.

sa•ri•ɛk: merit feast given by a man for his daughter.

sa•ri•fā: gift of new clothes presented at merit feasts to 'men of rank'.

Sarikjouw: village in Bomboret reputed to be old 'Ba•la•lik' settlement.

sa•rus: 'sacred' juniper.

sĕwala: potters and leather tanner of the pre-conversion Waigal Valley.

sha•gaj (sturi): silver chains now worn decoratively by Kalash women - traditionally Bashgali symbols of rank.

Shāh ni•si: one day feast in which common man presides as 'King'.

shā•ra kund•ā•li: markhor hide (hair) moccasins, symbols of high rank.

shā•ra shiŋg•una: (silent/unheard) inside a markhor's horn.

shā•ru: autumn.

Sha•ma•kut: clan in Krakal village, Bomboret.

Shiŋg Mou: markhor horn altar in Rombour.

shish ouw: 'head breads' made by men to ritually purify their women at the winter solstice festival.

shi•ri•stan na•ta•ă•louw: funeral dance done on (unharvested) grains, preferably millet, ritual denoting high rank.

shticuri/nam: Kati term of rank for a man who has done at least eighteen times, a feast similar to the Kalash 'pi•mā•sā'.

shu•ra moch: (formal rank) 'man-killer'.

shu•ra uphōr: dance performed to achieve 'man-killer' rank.

Siah Posh: wearers of the black robe, applies to Kalash, Kom, Kati.

so•ōl•lō: man's wicker burden basket.

st͡ʃank ku•chɛk: women's divination technique done with a brass bracelet.

stri•ja ū•bat: trouble caused in a household be dissatisfied women.

sū•ā ʒaj: 'golden irrigation channel' in Rombour Valley.

such! such!: prayer spoken at ritual to purify.

su•chɛk: to make a ritual purification ceremony.

sur mach: Kati term for a 'man-killer' with numerous killings to his name.

Su•ri•zan: 'goat shed god' who protects livestock wintering in the valleys.

Sut•arām: Bashgal (and Waigal) god, father of goddess De•san•i.

thum ku•chɛk: men's divination technique done with goat hair bow.

tro•ma chēar: sour milk.

trush nʒɛ̌ř•una uk: (a person)working his or her way into another's good graces by being as unnoticeable as 'water flowing between the roots of wheat plants'.

Tsiam: the original homeland of the Kalash.

U•chow: dairy festival in late August in Bomboret and Rombour Valleys.

um•bu•lɛk: 'to raise (oneself) up' refers to shamanic trance state.

us•tēik ʒɛ ni•sēik: generosity and hospitality at feasts and in one's own home.

Utah: hereditary priest from one high-ranking lineage of pre-conversion Bashgal.

Vɛtr: Kati word for fairy.

wāly: daugher/sister's share of her natal clan's livestock.

Wa·ko·kāly: clan in Rombour Valley that had ties with pre-conversion Waigal Valley.

wā̃·õ: two 'maūn' or approximately eighty-four kilos.

wā·suŋ·gaiy bũr̃: 'arrow sheath' (of a successful warrior) - metaphor for solidarity and co-operation of the clan.

wɛ̃·hunk: upstream.

Wɛt·dɛsh: Kalaṣh name for Prasun Valley in present day Nuristan.

Ẋo·daj: Persian (Urdu) word for God.

Yarkhan: ancient location from whence many Kalaṣh customs come, for example, wood carving designs, wine-making, shamanism.

za·na·mat: fine imposed by 'respected elders' in attempting to resolve a dispute.

Żoe·shi: Kalaṣh spring festival (May).

zõr be·a·nẽ moch: man (born from) strong/forceful seeds.

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